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RECENT POPES AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE MEDIATION OF MARY

WHAT part are we to assign to Mary in the work of the world's redemption and of our soul's salvation? To this question there really can be but one answer. Since both the world's redemption in general and our soul's salvation in particular are works of the gratuitous mercy and grace of God, and not merely works of human justice—our own or those of other men—we must assign to Mary in both precisely that part which God Himself in His sovereign freedom and bounty assigned to her. We cannot assign more. We ought not to assign less.

Now to come to a knowledge of this free decree and bounty of God in regard to Mary, obviously the efforts of unaided human reason will not suffice. In this matter the light of reason alone would lead us either to be buoyed up by a too sanguine speculation, or to be dismayed by too insuperable difficulties. And in any case, "*neither doth anyone know the Father but the Son and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal him*" (Matt. xi, 27). Consequently, in order to learn of Our Lady's part in God's plan and economy for the world's redemption and our soul's salvation, we must go with diligent and unprejudiced minds and humble and prayerful hearts to the data of God's own revelation, as embodied in the Scriptures, in the tradition and theology of the Church, in the Liturgy which is at once the rhythm of the Church's life and the song of her living faith, and in the declarations of the Supreme Pontiffs.

In this article we shall limit ourselves to the last mentioned criterion, namely, the declarations of the Popes, and more especially of the Popes of recent times. The special reasons for our so doing will be apparent in the course of the article itself. Only one reason of a general yet vital nature shall we mention at this stage. Since traditional Church teaching is never lost sight of, but is either tacitly presumed or often explicitly resumed in Papal documents, the purpose of which is to expound and determine doctrinal matters for the faithful, the examination of recent Papal declarations on the mediation of Mary will consequently be tantamount to a resumé of all other arguments. We have, moreover, recently dealt elsewhere¹ with the positive theology of some of the earliest Church Fathers on the mediation of Mary, so that the repetition of these arguments here would be superfluous. As for arguments from the liturgy we may be permitted to recall one only. We draw attention to this because of the weight which the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* noted in it, and because the men-

¹ See "The Universal Mediation of Mary", by the present writer, in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 1941, pp. 193-212, 289-306.

tion of it in such circumstances so emphasized and enhanced it that it is become a fruitful principle in the whole field of Mariology and even of Soteriology.

In the preamble to the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, attention is drawn to the fact that the very language which the Spirit of God applies to Uncreated Wisdom in the Sapiential Books of the Old Testament, the Church, guided by the same Spirit, applies to Mary, Mother of Incarnate Wisdom, in the liturgy of her feasts. From which the conclusion is established that in the Divine Counsels the origin of the Blessed Virgin was predestined in one single and identical decree with the Incarnate Word. This, of course, was not a new discovery. The doctrine involved, namely, of Mary the New Eve intimately associated by the will of God with Christ the New Adam in the economy of the restoration as Eve was, in fact, intimately associated with Adam in the fall, was as old as Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Irenaeus. But it was a formal and authoritative emphasis on a most pregnant principle always tacitly accepted in the Church. In weighing the import of the Pontifical declarations we are about to consider, we ask our readers to bear constantly in mind both this principle of Mary the New Eve, and the Papal emphasis on it. To lose sight of this principle would be to risk underestimating or even misunderstanding these declarations.

Most of our readers will be quite familiar with the terminology that has gradually come to be associated with the theology of Mary's mediation. But to avoid misunderstandings we think we ought to resume and explain it briefly. Mary's mediation in the work of the Redemption and of our soul's salvation implies her active intervention in communicating the means of salvation from God its author to us the beneficiaries. Now the Redemption properly so called was wrought by Christ in the act of sacrificing His human life on the Cross. But in order that this Redemption wrought in general may become our salvation in particular, the fruits purchased by Christ on Calvary must be distributed or applied to our souls individually. Hence a distinction arises. The acquisition of merit or the purchase of the fruits of the Redemption by Christ is sometimes called redemption *in actu primo*, or objective redemption; the distribution of graces on the other hand is called redemption *in actu secundo*, or subjective redemption.¹ Now it is at least conceivable that Mary's co-operation might extend to one or other or even to both of these. Further, if we consider the actual acquisition of merit by Christ, it is conceivable that Mary might have co-operated in this immediately, that is, by an act of hers on Calvary that contributed in some positive way to constituting Christ the victim God required, or remotely and mediately only, as, for instance, by her consent to the Incarnation and her supplying from her maternal womb the victim of the Sacrifice. Or again, her co-operation might conceivably

¹ Many find the terms Objective Redemption and Subjective Redemption somewhat confusing; we shall use throughout instead, the terms Acquisition of Merit and Distribution of Graces respectively, as being more readily intelligible.

have been after both manners, mediate and immediate. Finally, by her co-operation—such as it may have been—with Jesus, principal operator of the Redemption, and dependently on Him, there might have accrued to Mary the acquisition of merit, and/or the distribution of graces, either condignly, i.e. with a title of justice, or only with a title of equity.

Such are the possibilities of Mary's mediation in the precise language of theology. We may now consider the facts of her actual mediation in the light of recent Pontifical declarations.

Let us begin with a text from Benedict XV, the Pope who approved of the introduction of the feast of Mary Mediatrix of all Graces.¹ The text occurs in the Apostolic Letter, *Inter Sodalicia*, published in 1918, and may be rendered in English :

Thus as Mary suffered and almost died with her Son suffering and dying, so also she renounced her maternal rights in her Son for the salvation of the world, and according to her capacity, immolated her Son in order to placate the justice of God, so that it may be truly said that together with Christ, she redeemed the human race.

Now we find that in this text the Pope distinguishes two sets of acts by which Mary co-operated with her Son in the act of Redemption. Firstly, she compassionates and almost dies with her Son suffering and dying. We shall not delay here to assess the merits for herself and for us that Mary acquired by this act.² Secondly, Mary renounces her maternal rights in her Son, thereby, says the Pope, immolating Him as far as lay in her power (as Mother) for the salvation of men and placating of Divine Justice. Now, it must be noted that as nobody but Jesus possesses personal rights over Himself, the victim, so nobody but Mary alone possesses maternal rights over her Son—the same identical victim. And as nobody, not even God, takes away the personal rights of Jesus, but rather Jesus lays them down freely for our salvation as He expressly stated (John x, 18), so, in virtue of the *potentia ordinata*, not even God will take away the Mother's rights which He freely gave to Mary over His Son and hers. Mary must freely renounce them, uniting her renunciation to that of Jesus, so that the Victim may be under every heading acceptable to God—will be, in fact, the Victim He freely decreed to accept for man's salvation.

So, indeed, Pope Benedict asserts that Mary renounces her maternal rights for the identical same purpose as Jesus, namely, for the salvation of mankind and to placate the Divine Justice. The salvation of the human race and the satisfaction of Divine Justice are here ascribed primarily to Christ and secondly and subordinately to Mary. Are not such acts of Mary the New Eve, acts of an immediate associate with the Redeemer in the very act of acquiring the fruits of the Redemption? Can it be said or

¹ Decr. S. Rit. Cong., 12 Jan., 1921. Feast, 31 May.

² See *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, art. cit., p. 201, Note 1, and p. 304.

even imagined that God did not accept¹ these acts of Mary, intimate associate of the Redeemer, for the identical purpose for which the Redeemer offered these acts? What then is wanting for attributing to Mary an immediate co-operation in the acquisition of the merits of the Redemption? Pope Benedict at least seems to find nothing lacking because he expressly states that in consequence of this precise co-operation, it can be truly said that Mary redeemed the human race together with Christ.

Nor can it be justifiably argued, as has been attempted, that the phrase "*quantum ad se pertinebat*" (according to her capacity) applied to Mary's co-operation, restricted this so as to exclude her immediate co-operation in the acquisition of the fruits of the Redemption. The words indeed imply a restriction, but a golden one which the Pope was bound to make. They do not deny that the co-operation of Mary was real, but they determine and define theologically the limits within which such co-operation of Mary was possible, namely, subordinate to that of Jesus and necessarily dependent on it, yet really and positively and according to God's plan.

Nor, moreover, was this phrase used by the Pope new, nor for that matter were several other phrases of the text we have quoted. But while the interpretation attributed here to these phrases is confirmed by an appeal to their previous use by theologians,² the use of them in this context by Pope Benedict gives them a precision and an authority they would not otherwise have.

Pope Benedict's successor, Pius XI, not only re-echoes and emphasizes the teaching of his predecessor in numerous documents, he stabilizes and as it were crystallizes it by giving Our Lady publicly and repeatedly the official title of Coredemptrix. Let us set down some of these numerous texts from Pope Pius XI, numbering them for later convenience of reference:

(1) From the Encyclical, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*³ 1928: "Finally, on these our desires and undertakings, may the most benign Virgin Mother

¹ In *Rep. Par.*, iii, Dist. XVIII, q. 1, 4, in which he treats of merit., Scotus says: "quia tamen nihil in Deo est acceptandum, quod non est acceptatum".

² This whole passage of Pope Benedict recalls almost verbally the contexts of both Cornelius a Lapide, S.I., and del Moral, O.F.M. In his Commentary on Proverbs viii, 19: *Melior est enim fructus meus auro*, a Lapide writes: "Hac de causa B. Virgo a Patribus vocatur mediatrix et auctrix salutis, non quod ipsa per se ejus . . . pretium solvit (hoc enim soli Christo competit) sed . . . sicut ergo Christus immolans se in cruce pretium iustum pro nobis Patri persolvit, sic B.V. eundem ac seipsam cum eodem offerens Patri, quantum potuit (note the phrase) cooperata est Christi sacrificio, et consequenter redemptioni nostrae. Christus enim est res et peculium Virginis: Christus enim ad Virginem pertinebat quasi filius ad matrem. . . ."

del Moral (*Fons illimis Theol. Scoticae*, n. 49, p. 376) writes: "Deipara habuit in redemptionem hunc influxum suis meritis quibus simul cum Filio suo obtulit pretium redemptionis praedestinatorum, nempe ipsum Filium et tanquam suum obtulit, quia ex iure materno, (again, note the phrase) quo ipsum possidebat, Patri aeterno contulit pro mundo, . . . quod in premium accepit [Deus] cum Filio salutem mundi . . . tanquam effectum utrisque communem." Of this doctrine of del Moral, Bittremieux (*De Med. Univ. B.M.V.*, Brugis, 1926, p. 75) says that in his Encyclical *Inter Sodalicia* Benedict XV "hanc doctrinam magnifice declaravit".

³ *A.A.S.*, 1928, p. 170 seq.

of God look down favourably—she who by giving us the Redeemer, by rearing him, by offering him as a victim on the cross, by such intimate association with Christ and by her own most singular grace, became the Reparatrix of the world and is truly called so (*reparatrix item exstitit meritoque appellatur*).

(2) In the Apostolic Letter: *Explorata est res*, the Pope repeats practically the same phrases as in the foregoing.

(3) From the prayer at the closing of the Jubilee Year¹ 1935: "O Mother of piety and mercy, who when thy most beloved Son was consummating the Redemption of the human race on the altar of the cross, didst stand there both compassionating Him and as Coredemptrix (*Com-patien et Coredemptrix adstitisti*) preserve in us, we beseech Thee, and increase day by day the precious fruits of His Redemption and of thy compassion."

(4) Addressing (in Italian) the Catholic Women's League of Rome, December,² 1923: The Holy Father . . . rejoiced from the depths of his heart that they were desirous of participating in the work which was the most exalted glory of their heavenly Mother, Most Holy Mary, the Woman who wished to repair the sin of the first woman and consequently as Coredemptrix shared in (*Corredentrice condivide*) the work of her Divine Son, the Redeemer.

(5) To pilgrims of the diocese of Vincenza,³ 1933 (in Italian): "The Redeemer could not, from the very nature of things (*per necessità de cose*) but associate His Mother in His work, for which reason we invoke her with the title of Coredemptrix."

(6) Addressing (in Italian) pilgrims from Spain,⁴ 1934: "You young people ought to associate yourselves with the thoughts and desires of Most Holy Mary, who is our Mother and Coredemptrix."

Now, the value of these texts taken individually is very great; the authority of them in their cumulative effect is vastly greater. In the first, the Holy Father enumerates the various ways—remote and immediate—by which Our Lady co-operated in the Redemption. Amongst them he includes "*and by offering Him as a victim on the cross*". Could anything possibly be a more intimate association of Mary with Jesus in the very act by which He purchased the redemption? All the more so that the Holy Father adds that in virtue of this, together with her other (remote) acts of co-operation—*by this intimate association with Christ and her own most singular grace*, Mary became the *Reparatrix of the world and is truly called so*.

That the Holy Father did not restrict Our Lady's co-operation to the distribution of graces only, but extended it also to the acquisition of the fruits of the Redemption, by the intimate act we have already noted, namely, "*by offering Him as a victim on the cross*", is confirmed beyond doubt by the past tense used in the expression *Reparatrix exstitit—she coredeemed*.

¹ *Osservatore Romano*, 29–30 April, 1935.

² *Ibid.* 22–23 Dec., 1923.

³ *Ibid.* 1 Dec., 1933.

⁴ *Ibid.* 25 March, 1934.

In the third text quoted, the Holy Father expressly applies to Mary the title *Coredemptrix*, which obviously implies in Mary something more than merely compassionating her Son—*Compatiens et Coredemptrix adstifisti*—and he expressly attributes the single set of fruits won *on the altar of the cross*, to the Redemption of Jesus and the Coredemption of Mary, begging Mary to preserve and increase in us these precious fruits. In the remaining texts, taking as it were all this for granted, he simply calls Mary *Coredemptrix*, and urges his hearers to co-operate with Mary in the work of coredemption. Nor can it be argued from this text that the Pope here restricts Mary's co-operation, like ours (due proportion being observed), to a co-operation only in the distribution of graces. Apart altogether from the Catholic instinct of his hearers, the Pope had elsewhere too clearly set forth and emphasized the unique position and office of Mary as *Coredemptrix* to leave any room for confusion.

All the foregoing considerations are strengthened by a comparison of the texts of Pius XI with parallel texts of Pius X on the same subject :

*Text of Pius X from the Encyl. Ad
Diem Illum (2 Feb., 1904) :*

*Text of Pius XI (No. 1
above)*

"Because of the unity of will and communion of sufferings between Mary and Christ, Mary has most worthily merited to become the Reparatrix of the fallen world, and consequently the dispenser of the treasures which Jesus won for us by His death."

"... She (Mary) who by giving us the Redeemer, by rearing Him, *by offering Him as a Victim on the Cross* (italics ours), by such intimate association with Christ, and by her own most singular grace, became the Reparatrix of the world and is truly called so?"

And again :

"Because of her surpassing sanctity and of her association with Christ and because she was called by Christ to the work of the salvation of mankind (Mary), as is commonly said (*ut aiunt*), merits for us equitably whatever Christ merited condignly, and is the principal Dispensatrix of the largesse of (His) graces."

In comparing these texts it is impossible not to come to the conclusion that the encyclical of Pius X was present to the mind and perhaps even

to the eye of Pius XI when composing his. Also it is impossible not to admit that the explicit doctrine of the text of Pius XI is more extensive than that of Pius X, and that while Pius X clearly taught, at least, Mary's co-operation in the distribution of graces, Pius XI as clearly taught in addition Mary's intimate co-operation in the acquisition of merit, as has already been shown. It would not be against any recognized theological principle we know of, to suggest that the text of Pius XI extends the meaning of the text of Pius X. But as Bittremieux suggests,¹ it is not even necessary to have recourse to that expedient, but rather to say that the general statement of Pius X must be interpreted by the later, clearer and more precise language of Pius XI.

We do not pretend to ignore the controversy that has raged round this celebrated text of Pius X. Neither do we intend to add to the voluminous expressions of opinion to which it has given rise. We shall only make a few remarks proper to our present purpose. Granted, though not conceded, that this text of Pius X does not teach the co-operation of Mary in the acquisition of merit on Calvary, neither does it positively exclude it. That suffices for our present purpose even as it evidently sufficed for Pius XI, who, in spite of it, yet in a text which recalled it, clearly taught Mary's intimate co-operation with Jesus in the acquisition of the merits of the Redemption on the Altar of the Cross. Nor can we agree, as is sometimes urged, that when in the same encyclical Pius X asserts that: "*the private and proper right in the bestowal of graces belongs solely to Christ*", the Pope thereby positively excludes the immediate co-operation of Mary in the acquisition of the merits of the Redemption. In the first place, we refer again to the texts of both Benedict XV and Pius XI, which, as we hope sufficiently to have shown, clearly taught such co-operation of Mary. This they could not and would not have done had Pius X positively excluded it. In the second place, and by way of explanation, we may add that we do not suggest, nor do we know anybody who has suggested, that Our Lady has a private and proper title to the distribution of graces or to the acquisition of merit *independently of Christ*. Here indeed a phrase of Cornelius a Lapide expresses the position admirably and succinctly: *Christus enim est res et peculium Virginis*. Our Lady's title to Coredeemption and immediate co-operation in the acquisition of merit is not based on anything in her own person as of herself properly and privately. It is based on something redundant (so to speak) from the unique victim, namely on the rights God gave her as mother in the unique victim, who is her Son, and who by that fact is also *her* riches and *her* offering to God, as well as her Son's. For since these rights of Jesus and Mary over the unique victim are exercised under totally different headings—personal and maternal respectively—they are not mutually exclusive. Obviously, too, they are of a vastly different primacy. His are principal and primary, independent of

¹ Bittremieux, "*Adnotationes circa Doctr. B.M.V. Corred. in documentis Rom. P.P.*", Eph. Theol. Lov., 1939, p. 775.

hers, capable of existing (certainly in another economy of Redemption) without hers; hers are subordinate and secondary, necessarily dependent on His, incapable of existing even without His, and yet none the less real for all that. Finally, unlike Jesus, Mary is not hypostatically united with the Word. In her coredemptive function, therefore, she is not in the enjoyment of what theology calls the *Potestas Excellentiae*—the Power of Excellence. But if, in virtue of God's plan for the Redemption, and of the Divine Maternity, by which that plan and function are at once realized by God and revealed to us, Mary received from God what we might be permitted to call a *Potestas Redundantiae*—a Power of Redundance over the whole redemptive activity of her Son the Redeemer—and if we have seen the Popes assert this clearly, in so many equivalent words, why should we be scandalized, as it were, at God's generosity? Indeed the understanding of this economy, so far from militating against the primacy and uniqueness of Christ's mediation, emphasizes it. For it shows, in the spirit of the principle enunciated in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, the beauty and harmony of God's plan in granting to Mary a role by which, though in complete dependence upon Jesus, she would yet co-operate with her Son in the world's redemption. This is, in fact, only to attribute to the Redemption a modality which in virtue of God's plan it was bound to have; for it is a Redemption wrought by Jesus who is God's Son and Mary's.

Having thus, we think, sufficiently analysed the Papal texts, we may now be permitted to make a few general remarks about the value and authority of Papal declarations and documents, after which we shall be in a position to draw certain conclusions that we believe our readers will agree are warranted by the texts we have been considering.

In enumerating the criteria by which to discern the living faith of the Church, theologians emphasize the ordinary magisterium, which has its highest expression in the Acts of the Supreme Pontiffs: Encyclicals, Apostolic Letters, Briefs. These various Acts are, of course, of unequal solemnity and importance, yet all are authoritative in their own degree and extent. Encyclicals, theologians hold, may speak infallibly. But at all events, when the Vicars of Christ, as Pastors and Universal Doctors to whom the Church is committed, affirm and teach a doctrine for the Church, in one of these various Acts, their authority is always exceedingly great. And obviously it is all the greater when this doctrine is emphasized again and again either by the same Pope or especially by successive Popes. All recognize this, and the eagerness with which theologians support their views with the texts of the Popes is proof of it.

On the other hand, we must not attribute to Papal documents—even to the conceptual meaning of the words they use—more weight than the Popes themselves intended. To appraise this weight, we must study text, context and parallel contexts of the same or of other Popes which complete or illustrate one another, while bearing always in mind the traditional teaching of the Church. Now in evaluating the texts of the Popes on the

Mediation of Mary we have endeavoured to keep all these principles constantly before us. Doing this, we have seen that the last two Supreme Pontiffs have deliberately, categorically and repeatedly applied to Mary, for the purpose of expressing her co-operation in the work of Redemption, not only synonyms and circumlocutions, but the very identical words that express the purchasing by Christ of the merits of the redemption on the altar of the Cross. Some writers have deplored this fashion of speaking on the part of the Magisterium, on the plea that it involves a danger which Catholic dogma formally rejects, namely, of attributing to Mary an equality of office and function with Christ. But, surely, Catholic instinct forestalls such a monstrous possibility, and even if it did not, the Popes—notably Pope Benedict, as has been shown in its proper place—have formally used qualifying phrases and precisions that keep Mary's action on the plane of the relative. So that while bringing into relief Mary's unique mediation by immediate co-operation with Christ in the very act of redemption, they emphasize her total dependence on Christ.

Indeed we might be entitled to ask those who are troubled by this manner of speaking on the part of the Magisterium, to suggest by what language and expressions, other than those used, the Popes could have expressed, if they wished to do so, the immediate co-operation of Mary in purchasing the fruits of the Redemption? The conclusion is rather altogether against the timid ones. Will anybody suggest that when the Popes used these words and expressions, they used them lightly and without weighing the consequences? Will anybody doubt that the Popes were aware of the controversies centring on the Mediation of Mary; of the hesitancy, even of the opposition—in the best of faith—of some theologians? Or doubt that the Popes could foresee, and did in fact foresee, that their words would be understood both by theologians and by the faithful, as implying Our Lady's immediate co-operation in the acquisition of merit, and as an authoritative argument for fostering this belief both in doctrine and in piety? This was a doctrinal matter. The Pontiffs were bound to avoid terms and expressions that might be misleading. They did not avoid terms that implied Mary's immediate co-operation with Christ in purchasing the fruits of the Redemption on Calvary. They even multiplied them and eagerly sought occasions of using them. And as might be expected, and as was doubtless intended, Bishops all over the world re-echoed the words of the Popes in their pastorals and addresses.

Some decades ago many did not admit the doctrine of Our Lady's Universal Mediation in the Distribution of Graces, which nevertheless the Popes taught. Now, relatively few reject this doctrine. So that today the controversy rather centres round Our Lady's mediation in the matter of the co-purchasing or acquisition of the merits of the Redemption, and this not so much her remote co-operation, which a growing number concede, but her immediate co-operation in the very act on Calvary, by which our Redemption was purchased. In the foregoing study we have been

anxious to enable readers to be in a position to appraise the merits of the controversy themselves. Meanwhile, we may establish the following conclusions which have at least this valuable extrinsic merit: they coincide substantially, except on one point (the fourth), with the conclusions arrived at on the same subject by such well-known Mariologists as Seiler¹ and Bittremieux:²

(1) The explanation of Mary's mediation in virtue only of her co-operation in the Distribution of Graces may suffice in the face of the declarations of Pius X but not of those of Benedict XV and Pius XI.

(2) The explanation of Mary's mediation in virtue only of her remote or mediate co-operation in the Acquisition of Merit does not suffice in the face of the obvious meaning of the declarations of Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI.

(3) Unless the Popes declare to the contrary, the texts of Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI are an obvious and clear assertion of the Mediation of Mary by a certain immediate co-operation on Calvary with Jesus her Son, in the acquisition of the merits of the Redemption.

We may add a fourth conclusion which we do not say is expressly contained in the Pope's words, but which we claim can be legitimately deduced from them:

(4) Once the obvious meaning of the texts of Pope Benedict XV and Pius XI is admitted, it is difficult to evade the conclusion that the Mediation of Our Lady in the acquisition of the merits of the Redemption is by a *condign* merit and not merely by an *equitable* one.

We do not intend at the moment to elaborate this fourth conclusion; not because it creates certain difficulties of which we are aware, arising out of the fundamental doctrine of grace and merit, but because it is not essential to the main contention concerning the Mediation of Mary as outlined in the other three conclusions. For the rest, we bear in mind also that a thousand difficulties cannot make one doubt against a clear doctrine. We believe, in fact, that this fourth conclusion can be legitimately defended. Yet even should it fail to be sustained, it does not and cannot—we repeat it—affect the main issue. We only refer to it in the present study at all, because some writers, in making difficulties against this very point and presenting them as insuperable, have—all unwittingly perhaps but effectively—created the impression that the whole doctrine of Mary's immediate co-operation in the acquisition of the merits of the Redemption falls with it.

That is not so. *Roma locuta est!* The Popes' words inculcating this doctrine are too clear and emphatic.

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¹ Seiler, S.v., *Corredemptrix*, Romae, 1939.

² Bittremieux, art. et loc. *supra* cit., pp. 776-78.

A DIARY OF DISTRACTIONS

MOST of the distractions I have when I am saying office are, I am ashamed to say, not connected with the office at all. But now and again I find my attention wandering off after a red herring which seems to have been trailed for me deliberately; the office itself tempts me to think, instead of saying my prayers. I suppose this happens to holy people, too; but then the distractions they get are holy distractions, so that no great harm is done. Mine aren't; they are literary and critical reflexions on the text which lies in front of me, the ruminations of an ex-don and an ex-schoolmaster, who pricks up his ears instinctively at the slightest deviation from the normal. I have made a collection, here, of the sort of distractions I mean, vaguely hoping that if I can get them down in print they will flutter round me less importunately in future—butterflies, pinned down once for all. My selection has been made entirely from the winter quarter which we have just finished, so that my readers may forget them before there is any danger of the distraction-habit spreading among the clergy through my fault.

Nov. 30. Advent Sunday. How good the first responsory at Mattins is. The centuries have standardized and simplified our liturgy, which makes it all the more exciting when (in Holy Week, for example) you come across a survival of the older, more complicated forms. Look at this responsory: *Aspiciens . . . Ite . . . Nuntia . . . Qui regnaturus . . . Quique terrigenae . . . Ite . . . Qui regis . . . Nuntia . . . Tollite . . . Qui regnaturus . . . Gloria . . . Aspiciens . . . Ite . . . Nuntia . . . Qui regnaturus*. You get the effect of angels answering one another with trumpets.

What was the *aëris immutatio* in the 9th lesson, which made St. Gregory think the signs in heaven were going to begin? An extra bad Sirocco? And those earthquakes, too. Has any seismologist ever tried to chart the earthquakes mentioned in the old authors?

Dec. 2. I always used to wonder how there would be enough metal in a sword to make a plough-share (2nd lesson). Like most town-dwellers, I thought a plough-share was the long blade which turns the earth back. That is a "mould-board"; the "share" is the little sharp tooth in front of it, which does the real cutting.

Dec. 6. St. Nicholas. Is it true, as I used to be told, that he is the patron of pawnbrokers, and that the three balls are either the three bags of money (mentioned in the 4th lesson) or the heads of the three children he raised to life? The other story is that they came from the Medici coat-of-arms; but this has six balls, a complete over.

Dec. 8. The Immaculate Conception. Was it Pio Nono who started the idea of incorporating encyclicals in the Office? And did those long third-nocturn lessons set a new standard, which has produced the overgrown lessons of some later feasts?

Dec. 9. The fourth lesson is all one sentence, without so much as a semi-colon to break it. If *Ineffabilis Deus* was meant to form part of the office, Pio Nono must have thought the religious had good lungs.

Dec. 11. I pause to admire the courage of St. Damasus in having the New Testament produced in a new version. I wonder what made him think there was anything wrong with the Old Latin? So many people must have pointed out to him that it had been good enough for their forefathers.

Dec. 15. I suppose it is the vanity of an ex-scholar, but I could never properly reconcile myself to the devout recital of a breviary sentence I couldn't understand. And in the fourth lesson of the Octave day there is a real teaser. Strip it of the words which are, grammatically, unessential, and it reads, "Nos . . . vix dum licet immeriti . . . ad hanc cathedram evecti totius ecclesiae gubernacula tractanda suscepimus, nihil certe antiquius habuimus, quam . . . omnia peragere . . . ut beatissimae Virginis honor augeretur." How were you to read it? Take *dum* with *licet*, and you make nonsense of it. *Vixdum* is one word, and the construction seems to be based on a sentence like that in the Phormio, "vixdum dimidium dixeram —intellexerat", "I had scarcely uttered half, (when) he understood". And the *licet* is "although", to be taken with *immeriti*. "Scarcely had we, though all unworthy, taken over the Government of the whole Church (when), we began to regard it as a thing of the first importance" and so on.

How admirably the decree ends! Another, and still longer, one-sentence lesson till you get to *Quapropter*. But the clauses roll out one after another, with the piled-up Ciceronian effect the Victorians loved. You can imagine Mr. Gladstone regretfully admitting to himself, "They do know how to do it, these chaps." Unfortunately, in our own day we have lost the taste for this sort of rhetoric; whence the difficulty, in England at any rate, of getting our friends to read encyclicals with their feet on the fender.

Dec. 16. Why is St. Eusebius, who died a long time after returning from exile, a martyr, whereas St. Chrysostom, who died on his way home, is only a confessor? I suppose because the Confessors *as a class* were a late importation into the Calendar, when it was necessary to find a description for the hermits? St. Felix, on 14 January, is an even more salient instance of an unmurdered martyr. Yet, curiously, when they canonized St. Sylvester (31 Dec.), they got him in the right list.

Dec. 21. Why is there so much insistence on having a special antiphon which says "Fear not; on the fifth day our Lord will come to you"? I cannot discover that it is a quotation from the Old Testament, as you would expect (the point of Advent being largely to show how the Hebrew prophecies have come true). Five is not as much of a mystic number as three, or seven. Is there any legend about it? Or does it come from one of these deutero-Canonical books which have no concordance? The nearest shot I can make is a reference to Judith, chapters vii and viii, where they decide to surrender Jerusalem if no help comes to them in five days

—and it comes to them through a woman. But the words do not occur there. And wouldn't the Jews have called it the sixth day?

In the gospel for the day (fourth Sunday in Advent), how effective is the break-away from "In illo tempore"! *Anno quintodecimo imperii Tiberii Caesaris*—the supernatural cutting across history at an exact point in time.

Christmas Day. A very pleasant feature of the office is the meeting of four great Latin doctors, each of them at his most characteristic. St. Leo, who has been keeping Advent with us, has really most to contribute; I wish we had more of him in the Breviary; he can talk theology without making it seem abstruse. "Agnosce, o Christiane, dignitatem tuam", and all that passage; that is ecclesiastical Latin justifying itself as a living language, more indebted to Tacitus than to Cicero. St. Gregory explains everything and leaves nothing to the imagination; he will have his parables as usual. St. Ambrose finds so much mystical meaning in the shepherds that he never gets to the Crib at all. He is outstripped by St. Augustine, arguing at the top of his voice with an imaginary Arian.

Is St. Anastasia perhaps the only Saint who doesn't get commemorated at Lauds, though she is commemorated at Mass? (By the way, should the priest bow at her name in the Canon at each of the three Masses, or only at the Aurora? A nice point for the rubricist.)

The hymn *A solis ortus cardine*, with the *Crudelis Herodes* (which should be *Herodes iratus*) of Epiphany, is of course abecedarian, and appeals to all the cross-word side of our natures. That is right, on Christmas Day; a hint of frivolity even in the Divine office.

Dec. 26. St. Jerome arrives too late for the feast. He, too, is characteristic, raising an exegetical difficulty and not solving it. I have never seen why Barachias should not have been the grandfather, or some remoter ancestor, of Zacharias? Our Lord, after all, is called the Son of David.

Dec. 27. I like the fourth antiphon at Lauds, because I have always wanted to explain the "some of those standing here" as referring to St. John. If so, it looks as if the Church sanctioned the idea of identifying the fall of Jerusalem (and the subsequent-consequent spread of the Church) with the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

Dec. 28. I caught the diocesan Ordo napping; they wanted me to wear violet, though the Holy Innocents fell on a Sunday. I can never remember what forgotten fast-day it is that has got confused with this feast, and so condemned us to honour the Holy Innocents with the least appropriate of all colours. (The Catholic Dictionary does not seem to have heard about this.) The end of the sixth lesson is good.

The Benedictus antiphon of the Sunday is lovely in itself, and is also a good example of the Christian spirit of paradox. The words come from Wisdom xviii, 14, and refer to the slaying of the first-born in Egypt; "he filled all things with death". Yet the paradox is justified; God's first-born people escaping out of Egypt prefigures the first-born Son escaping into Egypt.

Dec. 31. St. Sylvester (like Cardinal Bourne) died with the old year. Appropriately, since he had seen the death of the old world. In times like these, it is good to enter the new year with the reflexion that paganism does not last.

Jan. 1. The antiphon of the Magnificat at first vespers is one of those scriptural commonplaces which dwell gratefully in the mind. I think the operative word is *nimiam*, the unexpectedly, almost irrationally great love of God for us, like that shown to the Prodigal Son by his father. The odd thing is, that according to the Greek it should be plain *multum* (so they read at Armagh). But how right *nimiam* is! That is what is called "interpreting instead of translating", if you do it nowadays.

By an odd *tour de force*, on this one feast in the year (I mean, among the great feasts) the Church orders us to use the lessons *de scripturis concurrenti*; having previously arranged that they should all be about circumcision. It is not St. Paul at his most lucid: the kind of passage which makes you say "I will go back and worry that out, when I've finished Compline"—but one never does. By contrast, look at the sixth lesson, and mark the tremendous lucidity of St. Leo, effortlessly repudiating about six heresies.

This feast is really a feast of our Lady. All the psalms at Mattins are hers, except the first and last, and all the psalms at Vespers: look at the Lauds antiphons, too. It is as if we had suddenly felt ill-mannered about not noticing her presence in the stable (she did not mean us to), so pre-occupied were we with the thought of her Son.

Jan. 4. Feast of the Holy Name. Everybody has his favourite line in the *Jeux d'énigmes*: mine is *Totus desiderabilis*. Odd, that it should have been left for the Middle Ages to relish the full flavour of the Holy Name. We have to fall back on St. Bernard for the lessons; but how primitive and Augustine-like St. Bernard contrives to be! Especially that unacknowledged quotation from Lucan which comes in so pat in the eighth lesson.

Jan. 5. Vigil of the Epiphany. The eighth lesson has a charming reference by St. Jerome to the people who thought that the Herod who died in our Lord's Infancy must be the same Herod who mocked him at the time of His Passion. When I used to teach Scripture, it was a great relief to know that there were people like that even in St. Jerome's time.

Jan. 6. The extraordinary thing about the Epiphany is that St. Matthew should have recorded it, and should not have mentioned the prophecy which it so obviously fulfilled. Which I take to be good proof that St. Matthew did not invent it. The last sentence of the fifth lesson is St. Leo at his best again: it contains the whole of Milton's Ode to the Nativity.

This feast pleasantly recalls those early days of Christianity in which the idea of the Gentiles, yes, even the Gentiles, being brought into the Church of Christ seemed a splendid novelty. Watch the psalms at Mattins: all except the first (which is sung by the shepherds) repeat the word *Gentes* like a slogan. This accounts, too, for St. Gregory's rather scolding tone in the third nocturn.

Jan. 9. Is St. Leo our earliest authority for supposing that there were *three Wise Men*? (Fifth lesson.)

Jan. 10. Who first divided the Bible into chapters and verses? St. Jerome expects us to read the books of Numbers and Joshua in the course of the seventh and eighth lessons.

Jan. 11. Holy Family Sunday. From the literary point of view, I dislike today's office, so I will make no comment on it. Except to complain that my breviary (a little brown at the edges, so perhaps the mistake has now been corrected), prints *Infantem, Patrum, Mater* and *Pater* in the antiphons of first Vespers, although you get the ordinary *Christum* printing at Mattins and Lauds.

Jan. 13. The collect for the Octave day might well be quoted as the ideal breviary collect. "*Ut per eum, quem similem nobis forte agnovimus, inius reformari mereamur*"; an admirable thought (does it occur elsewhere?), and not a word wasted.

Jan. 15 and 16. St. Paul is fed by birds and buried by lions: St. Marcellus dies from the stench of his den. There ought to be a sermon in that, but I have never quite seen how it would take shape—perhaps the moral is that creatures are what man makes of them.

Jan. 18. Second Sunday after the Epiphany. The fourth lesson gives us, for a change, one of St. Chrysostom's distractions, but I fear a holy one. Hearing St. Paul's epistles read made him as excited as Job's horse at the sound of the trumpet: he recognized a voice he loved. It is doubtful whether most of us have the same reactions, especially to this most difficult of all the epistles, 2 Corinthians; though most of us, on reflection, could give the number of St. Paul's extant writings. (In their order? Perhaps not.) But St. Chrysostom had really studied them: he is their best exegete still.

I like the second responsory at Mattins of today's feast. The art of writing responsories is to take a text, cut it in half, then take a text from a different passage, and make the second half of your first text fit on to it. Here the Office shows, as it often does, a pleasant audacity of choice. It takes the words of St. Peter's boast, before his denial, and makes him repeat them in anticipation of his martyrdom.

Jan. 21. These early martyrs, whose legend has got enmeshed in the framework of the office, carry us back to the days when there was more variety in its recitation. I wish I liked the style of the legend-writers more: their Latin is terribly laborious. St. Ambrose relieves it, but perhaps he is not at his best.

Jan. 23. Do other priests, like myself, sometimes get the impression that every third Saint in the breviary devoted himself to ransoming prisoners? Actually St. Raymond of Penafort (a Dominican) helped St. Peter Nolasco (Jan. 28) to found the order of our Lady of Ransom (Sept. 24); St. John of Matha (Feb. 8) and St. Felix of Valois (Nov. 20) founded the Trinitarian order for the same purpose. That does make rather a lot

of it; but not too much in these days, when we might well be reminded to pray for the innumerable prisoners we forget.

Jan. 25. I wonder how the second antiphon of the second nocturn makes out that St. Paul occupied the twelfth throne, ignoring St. Matthias? St. Bede, in the ninth lesson, makes a point of it that he wasn't. The words enclosed in brackets in the third lesson are treated by a Lapidist and others (presumably for that reason) as an explanation put in by St. Luke. But surely they are part of what our Lord said? I think the bracket only indicates a very faint uncertainty (preserved in one Latin MS.) about the genuineness of the verse.

Jan. 28. St. Peter Nolasco died reciting the psalm "Confitebor tibi, Domine, in toto corde meo"—i.e. the 9th? The 110th? Or the 137th? They all start that way. I gather from other sources that it was the 110th, familiar to us from Sunday Vespers: "redemptionem misit populo suo" was the last thought of the dying Ransomer.

Jan. 29. St. Francis of Sales has a second nocturn which is something of a criticism on second nocturns. His biography is there, but not a hint of his character, though there was such a lot of it; no attempt to recognize the highly individual quality of the spirituality he taught.

Jan. 30. The hymn is better than most of the pseudo-classical hymns in the breviary; it smells of the chisel, rather, but it is sound verse. That it should relegate wars to Thrace, and sigh for the liberation of Jerusalem, always made me imagine that it dated from the first age of the Renaissance. But I see (the *Catholic Dictionary* gives you a complete account of that sort of thing) that it was written by Urban VIII, at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Feb. 1. Septuagesima. Yes . . . that second nocturn. If it is not fine writing, I don't know what is. But I always read it rather wishing that I didn't understand Latin; it is so infinitely depressing. Altogether, Septuagesima reminds me of taking medicine; there is a purging effect, but there is a *dreariness* about it which spoils any pleasure at the time. (The dreariness associates itself in my mind with the atmosphere of my uncle's study in a country rectory, where I started the study of the Bible *ab initio*; perhaps there was some painful passage, which lurks in my pre-conscious.) I am worried by St. Gregory in the third nocturn. That the Gentiles are the people called at the eleventh hour is clear to everyone who has tried to decode our Lord's parables. But if Adam was called at the first hour, Noe at the third, and so on, how do they fit into the picture? Adam has not been working *all day*, in the sense of being still alive when our Lord came. Surely the details of this (as of many) parables were not meant to be pressed?

Feb. 2. Candlemas. I don't like Candlemas coming after Septuagesima; it seems out of the picture. The chief charm of the office for the day is the regretful farewell it gives to our Christmas festivities, and that comes too late, when we are already in our penitential mood. It is the only thing that makes me want a fixed Easter.

Feb. 4. St. Andrew of Corsino, I notice, is m.t.v. So are all the other Confessors in February, looking as if they had been put there because there was more room; St. John of Matha died in December, and St. Titus in January. Of all the February Saints, the only one who is represented as having died a natural death in that pestiferous month is St. Peter Damian. I have no theories to account for this curious observation.

Feb. 6. St. Titus, perhaps because his local cult was on an island, would seem to have escaped attention. The end of the fifth lesson suggests that very little is known about his life, apart from the Bible. And he had to wait for Pio Nono to extend his feast to the universal Church (hence he is a Confessor; whereas St. Luke is a Martyr, though there is no suggestion that he died a violent death). I cannot call to mind anybody who was christened Titus, except Titus Oates.

Feb. 8. Sexagesima. St. Paul's appearance in the collect is due, I think I have been told, to a feast of his (I suppose his Conversion) having somehow crystallized itself in a moveable feast. Or is it just because of the Mass station? The other curious thing about the office is the antiphon of None, which is most unexpectedly taken from the third nocturn.

Feb. 11. The eighth Mattins antiphon was well found; they don't seem to have thought of it when the Immaculate Conception office was put out. The second nocturn lessons are not, somehow, very inspiring.

Feb. 12. This is, I suppose, the only group of Confessors which the Church honours as a group; I always feel it is a pity that we weren't given some responsories, and short chapters at Sext and None, which would have mentioned their plurality. It takes a kind of mental gymnastic to remind yourself that the statements you are making are true of each, and consequently of all.

Feb. 14. St. Valentine, Priest and Martyr—the same title is given to St. Felix, commemorated on 14 January; but St. Peter Martyr and St. Fidelis of Sigmaringa are not put down as “priests”, any more than the numerous priest-Confessors. I suppose it was an early habit which died out. But there are some people who can't be made to get things right; and the Anglican reformers contrived to give St. Valentine a sort of surreptitious consecration; whence Lamb's essay which refers to his tippet and lawn sleeves.

Feb. 15. Quinquagesima. Why is the ninth responsory at Mattins on this and the previous Sunday taken from the day's gospel? On Septuagesima Sunday, and all through those of Advent and Lent, it comes from the Old Testament, like the other responsories. I suppose there must be a reason for this anomaly, but I know I shall never be energetic enough to find it out.

Feb. 18. The longevity of St. Simeon, surely the oldest martyr, does not seem to be attested by the earliest sources. Hegesippus (as quoted by Eusebius, iii, 11) tells us about the search being made for descendants of David, but puts it down to Vespasian, not to Trajan. This in itself seems

more likely; Vespasian would be concerned to stamp out the embers of the Jewish revolt. And if this persecution was really responsible for the martyrdom of the son of Clopas, that would take anything between 36 and 45 years off his age. But Eusebius does not fix the date of the martyrdom.

It always seems a pity that Ash Wednesday is a mere feria in Lent, with no proper office.

Feb. 21. There is a splendid calm about the lessons from St. Bede. They end off the winter quarter of the breviary in a spirit of hope. Read through them again when you find yourself (as one always does on this Saturday) sitting in the confessional and trying to anticipate out of the wrong volume.

R. A. KNOX.

A FURTHER NOTE ON PRIESTLY EDUCATION

TWO articles in the CLERGY REVIEW, Dom Aelred Graham's "Catholic Theology and English Culture" (January, 1942), and Paedagogus' "The Teaching of Dogmatic Theology" (July, 1941), have a certain relation to an article of mine on the education of the Pastor in the September issue for last year. I have no wish, nor indeed any need, to criticize articles which I read with so much interest, but would rather thank Dom Aelred for the attractiveness with which he writes, and Paedagogus for the novelty of his suggestion. But, arising from their articles, there is one point on which I should like to make a note.

I have an impression, after reading these articles, that it is commonly thought that there is or could be some sort of intrinsic connection between a method of teaching theology and the English culture of a priest. No one who has read my article can be in doubt of my readiness to promote this culture. But I think (*a*) that there is no intrinsic connection between a method of teaching theology and the English culture of a priest, (*b*) that the standard of our theological studies is going to suffer considerably if we act on the idea that a connection of this kind exists, and (*c*) that the remedy for the aridity which is said to exist is not to be found in new methods of teaching theology but in improving the standard of the human studies which precede our metaphysics. Let us examine each of these three points.

(*a*)

You cannot look to one department of studies for a function that should be supplied by another. For instance, the science of physics, no matter by what method it is taught, in itself makes a man no funnier. We should certainly find a physicist a more complete human being if he loved Jane Austen and Charles Lamb. But we should rightly doubt the utility of a method of teaching physics that sought to supply the humanistic lack of

those who had not read the English humorists. In the same way it is no reproach to theological method that it does not develop a man's human culture in general; still less, that it does not develop his English culture in particular. In my experience, incidentally, the finest theological lectures I have ever heard were given by Spanish and Italian priests. I hold it no reproach to them that they did nothing for my English culture.

(b)

It is axiomatic that one cannot do two things at a time. If you attempt to adopt a method in one department of studies so as to supply what ought to have been done by a previous department, you are bound to lower the standard of the former. Let us take some neutral example. If, then, for instance, you wish to teach algebra through the medium of Irish, so that the student may pick up more Irish as he acquires algebra, I am sure you interfere with his algebra. I have been told by a University Professor in Ireland that the standard of secondary education, as revealed in the students coming up to the Universities, has fallen much lower since it was made compulsory to teach various subjects in Irish. Similarly, it seems inevitable to me that if you attempt to teach theology so as simultaneously to develop the human culture of the future priest, you will tamper with theology and reduce its standard sadly.

(c)

Given the subject matter of theology on the one hand, and the disposition of the aspirant to the priesthood on the other, I must say that I find the explanation of aridity as due to some defect of method, some lack of persuasiveness. One method may be more interesting than another; certainly, one professor can be more interesting than another. It is not for me but for those who teach theology to judge the point. But I am convinced that the explanation of aridity must lie much deeper. That deeper explanation, in my opinion, is the insufficient development of the mind in human studies. The effect of human studies on the seminarist, as I understand it, is that of extending the terminals of human interest to a point of contact with philosophy.

I have tried to point out, in my article on the education of the Pastor, that the training of the mind is gradual, by steps or *gradus*. Where human studies have not been adequately done a step is missing from the mind. The student missing such a step may indeed be obliged to read philosophy, but it cannot greatly interest him. For philosophy is an instrument for use in relation to contemporary culture, and since he does not truly share that culture he cannot truly long to acquire an instrument which he can never hope to use.

There is a sense, irrespective of heuristic or didactic methodology (what ugly and pretentious words!), in which all study is enquiry or search. According as one mounts from step to step, the receptivity for and desire

of further answering increase. It is only when one has learnt to read, which is an elementary step, that one becomes receptive of and interested in the mind of those who made our literature. It is only when one has acquainted oneself, not perhaps extensively indeed, but adequately, with the body of our civilized inheritance, both native and in its sources, that one becomes receptive of and interested in those ultimate realities into which philosophy enquires. I have put this in an abstract way. Let me give some concrete illustrations. I give them as they occur to me at random.

The student who has read English verse and who, let us suppose, is fond of the Romantics while he deplores their scepticism (for it is the bane of those who are adepts at seeing the is-beyond-the-seems that they are often so unsure about common or garden objectivity) will find (I think of the Gregorian Professors in my days in Rome) intense interest in the assurance of a Sciolla, with his smile, his solidity, and his pinch of snuff—held daintily between forefinger and thumb, and not indulged in until he has demonstrated, with a clarity like Spanish sunlight, that scepticism as a doctrine is but contradiction and repugnant as a fact. Or think how the student who knows, not necessarily a lot, but enough of cultured English thought to deplore the influence of Descartes or Kant, would listen to a professor like Géný on Epistemology. Or think, to take a final example, how the student conversant with the “problems” about science and religion, and with the fact that so many have nothing but a pietistic idea of God, would delight when listening to Munzi (a superb metaphysician) on Natural Theology, and learning an alignment of the ideas of contingent and necessary being; learning how to answer those to whom God is but a sort of super-uncle of whose existence they are just a bit unsure; and learning that God is Itself Existence and the sole explanation of all those showerings of created being which have only got or obtained existence.

The study of philosophy for such a mind, and we are considering not a quite distinguished mind but a mind adequately formed in a human sense, is not just interesting but exhilarating and dramatic to a degree. Moreover, the subsequent interest of such a mind in the science of theology is already guaranteed. For through philosophy, though it reach the height of natural enquiry, we do but touch the fringe of splendid things. It is later, when the lipping words of men address themselves to Mysteries of God, that the philosopher, using such notions as those of person, nature, and relation, comes to see that even the pinnacle of natural enquiry is but his handmaid when he considers the Incarnation and the Trinity.

As I tried to point out in my article, there is the happiest redundancy here. For when one sufficiently versed in human studies is thus interested in sacred studies, he uses that sacred knowledge for the teaching of the people, and the influencing of the English mind, as naturally and as effortlessly as a person running down a flight of stairs. For where he ascended by an unbroken staircase, step by step, there is nothing to impede the general traffic on the Jacob’s Ladder of the duly formed priestly mind.

Let that conclude my (a) (b) (c). In my opinion, the relation between *all* methods of teaching theology and the human culture of our priests is not intrinsic but extrinsic. Since it is extrinsic and yet most important I think there is all the more reason to stress and stress again the need of the formation of the student's mind in a human way before he approaches metaphysics. When and if, moreover, the tendency should arise to make our theology "easier", the point becomes not only important but critical as well. For what it would lead to, in my opinion, is but a lowering of standard in the teaching of metaphysics in our seminaries, and a general lack of distinction of any kind in the formation of our priests. Let me repeat: if there is or should ever be any widespread sense of aridity in the teaching of theology, the remedy is to be found not in lowering the standard of our lectures in theology, but in raising the standard of the human studies which precede them. It was, if I remember rightly, the otherwise deplorable Anatole France who none the less called reading the adventure of one's mind among books. It was well said. And certainly, to my thinking, unless our students have adequately done that excellent wandering and search which we call human studies, their minds will prove too provincial or too untravelled to appreciate the interest and the drama that reside in metaphysics.

JOHN P. MURPHY.

HOMILETICS

(As a variation from the usual notes on the Sunday epistles and gospels we are printing this month a series on the parish church.—EDITOR).

I. THE CHURCH

THE fact that the soul in a state of grace is the temple of the living God will provide a basis for many reflections suitable for the feast of the Dedication of a Church, for its titular, or for any occasion when the building has been extended or renovated.

(i) Blessing of the foundation stone is probably the best analogy with Baptism. Cf. the rite of this blessing in the Pontifical or in the Roman Ritual, Tit. viii, cap. 36; if the church is a temporary building, the rite of blessing it, in the following cap. 37, contains many similar ideas. The preparatory exorcisms at Baptism suppose that evil spirits are being driven out of the soul in order that the Holy Spirit of God may enter in; the inner meaning of the sacramental character is to depute a person for the true worship of God in varying degrees, as taught in *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 2. The mention of the name or title of the Church in the first prayer also provides an obvious parallel with Baptism.

"Other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus" (I Cor. iii, 11). On this foundation our souls are built and,

in the fulness of time, will form with Christ one majestic edifice, the living stones of I Peter ii, 5 and of the Postcommunion of the Dedication Mass : "Deus qui de vivis et electis lapidibus aeternum maiestati tuae praeparas habitaculum. . . ." If the building is consecrated, Confirmation could be taken as analogous to the soul's growth.

(ii) Much patient labour, many blows of the hammer and chisel were required to fashion the stones of the building ; sometimes what had been erected needed pulling down, and repairs or renovations will always be necessary. Some degree of effort, labour, mortification in the broad sense of the word, is essential for keeping the soul a fit habitation for the living God : all must be mortified—dead to sin—in order to live to God ; for most of us it suffices to accept, in addition, the troubles or sufferings or disappointments sent to us by God ; some may deliberately choose suffering in order to resemble Christ more closely.

(iii) A few of us may, like George Ward, be content with "four walls and my God". Usually the shell of a church is gradually adorned and beautified, a labour of years, to complete all the details of the original plan : statues in their niches, carvings and frescoes portraying the virtues of Christ, Our Lady and the Saints, may be taken to represent the soul's growth in virtue and holiness throughout the span of life. The style of the church may not favour excessive adornment—one really fine carving or picture is deemed sufficient ; well, it is the teaching of St. Thomas that, if one moral virtue is perfectly acquired, all the rest are necessarily present also.

There may be stained glass windows letting in the sun's beams and quietly illuminating the whole interior : the gifts of the Holy Ghost are habits infused from heaven, perfecting the moral virtues, making the soul easily moved by God's secret inspirations ; e.g. the gift of counsel perfects the virtue of prudence.

The church may have a tower or spire pointing heavenwards, as our whole life must be for God's glory. In any case, the highest point of the building externally will surely be a cross, proclaiming that the building belongs to Him who died thereon ; and everything within is focussed, or should be, on the altar of sacrifice. The soul in its warfare will conquer "in hoc signo" : we preach Christ crucified. . . . By serving God in joy and harmony we, like bells, bring others to His service "ad sanctam ecclesiam et ad praemium aeternum". (*Blessing of Bells*).

(iv) It is of the nature of mortal sin to deprive the soul of Grace, to turn the Holy Spirit out of His temple. The soul is then like a church despoiled by Reformers, who have destroyed the altar and everything sacred, leaving the building bleak and desolate ; or it is like a sacred edifice given over to some profane use. "Behold I stand at the door and knock" (*Apoc.* iii, 20). By repentance the door is reopened, God enters into His own, and the soul is once more alive with His presence.

(v) Travelling about the country one sees a variety of churches. Some are brand new like the soul of a newly baptised infant. Others, worn and battered, show the wear and tear of many years, and most of us prefer one of this sort to pray in. There is a rugged beauty about an ancient church, as there is about the soul of a man who, in the course of a long life, has had to repent of many sins and falls ; but the repairs have been good, solid and lasting ; the building may even be stronger now than it was when first

erected. Occasionally we see a temple of God, shabby, dirty, neglected, in danger of total collapse; the time may come when the Master will ask why it encumbers the earth—it is fit for nothing but to be burned—a dreadful sentence to fall upon what was once a temple of the living God. But none, even the most shattered, is beyond redemption: for God shows His almighty power chiefly by pitying and having mercy upon us. On nearly every church that we meet, there is, alas, a debt. On our souls, most likely too, there is a debt of temporal punishment due to our sins, a debt which must be paid to the last farthing; it is a terrible burden, but we must never forget that Christ has shouldered it for us and with us, and the merits of the Saints help to make up for what is wanting.

(vi) From the earliest times the material buildings dedicated to God's worship have received honour and veneration amongst Christians: lengthy ceremonial of consecration: their subsequent desecration by grave crimes committed therein: liturgical honours paid on the dedication anniversary. They are revered, indeed, because of the sacred rites performed within their walls. But the human soul is the temple of God in a still deeper sense, and the reverence we have for our churches is mistaken and disproportionate unless it profits the spiritual good of our souls. Cf. again the *Postcommunion* of the Dedication Mass: "auxiliare populo tuo supplicanti; ut, quod Ecclesiae tuae corporalibus proficit spatiis, spiritualibus amplificetur augmentis."

II. THE ALTAR

From the vast material contained in legal and liturgical sources those points are selected which are likely to have a devotional interest for the people.

(i) What is the chief memorial of Christ in a church wherein the Blessed Sacrament is not reserved? Various replies are possible: the Crucifix, Stations of the Cross, etc., but actually it is the altar. In the *Ordination of Subdeacons* we read: "The altar is Christ Himself as John witnesses, who in his *Apocalypse* relates that he saw a golden altar as he stood before the throne on which the offerings of the faithful are consecrated to God the Father" (*Apoc.* viii, 3). The idea is further explained in the Breviary, 9 November, *lectio iv*: "The altar anointed with chrism is a figure of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the altar, the priest and the victim", for it was in His sacred humanity that Christ offered Himself as a victim. Hence, the five crosses on a consecrated stone may be taken to symbolize His Five Wounds; the reverence paid to it, e.g. bows, incensing, ceremonial washing on Good Friday evening in the larger churches, is better understood if regarded as honour paid to Christ, though it may also be taken as veneration given to the thing not the symbol. This is particularly true of the "oscula" at Mass and other times. The Mass prayer "Oramus, etc." refers, indeed, to the relics, but the practice of kissing the altar was in possession long before this tenth century prayer was introduced; also the deacon kisses the altar not the relics.

(ii) In the Latin rite the altar is public—"altus" "alta res" appears to be the derivation of the word—and the genius of the Latin rite is seen chiefly

in this open sharing of all the faithful in the sacred mysteries. It is not so in the East, where the screen or *iconostasis* excludes the public. The bitter quarrels about Gothic screens, which so disturbed our grandparents, really turned on this liturgical aspect rather than on points of architecture. It is the people's altar ("my sacrifice and yours"), and the text of the *Ordination of Subdeacons* continues: "the cloths and corporals of this altar are the members of Christ, God's faithful people, with whom as with costly vestments the Lord is clad." Thus, at the ceremonial stripping of the altar in Holy Week, we have something more than a symbol of Christ being stripped by His executioners; we may see in it a reminder that His disciples all leaving Him fled away—and if a reminder, a lesson also.

Introibo ad altare Dei. At the most solemn moments of their lives the faithful come or are brought to the altar: churching, reconciliation of a convert, confirmation, marriage and death; they come, even daily, to receive the Body of Christ, but on these special occasions to assert in some other way their adhesion to Him.

(iii) Christ being the mediator between God and man, earth and heaven, the altar shares in this quality. Cf. Genesis xxviii, the account of Jacob's vision, as he lay upon the stone, of a ladder between earth and heaven; the rite of consecrating an altar refers repeatedly to this stone. In the prayer *Supplices te rogamus*, during the Canon, a phrase of great beauty connects "hoc altare" and "sublime altare tuum"; similarly the blessing of incense invokes the intercession of St. Michael standing at the heavenly altar. This altar in heaven is Christ. Cf. de la Taille, *Mysterium Fidei*, xiii, §2 "De Christo ut altari aeterno", and Van Eyck's famous altar-piece representing the Lamb of *Apocalypse* v, 6 standing upon an altar, with the Precious Blood flowing into a chalice, surrounded by angels and saints and surmounted by a figure of the Priest according to the Order of Melchisedech.

Jacob took the stone of his vision and set it up for a title, pouring oil upon it: "The Lord is in this place and I knew it not." The altar is the holiest spot in the church and is occasionally used for other sacred purposes besides sacrifice, e.g. the voting urn at the election of a Pope is placed upon it; monastic orders sign their vows upon it. It is, accordingly, from every point of view, the most suitable place for the Tabernacle containing the Holy Eucharist, *pace* those modern liturgists who seem to regard this location as regrettable.

(iv) Christians in primitive times used for the Eucharistic sacrifice a wooden table, influenced in this choice both by a desire to imitate the Last Supper and by an aversion, no doubt, to pagan "altars". Cf. Breviary, 9 November, *lectio vi*. From the custom of celebrating upon the tombs of martyrs in the catacombs, fixed stone altars became the rule in buildings erected for Christian worship. Cf. I Cor. x, 4; Eph. ii, 20; I Peter ii, 4. The altar stone is still called the "mensa" and it always contains a small cavity or sepulchre containing relics of martyrs; occasionally may be seen the entire body of a saint enshrined beneath an altar. Cf. *Apoc.* vi, 9. If the document recording the consecration has been retained in the parish archives, the names of the martyrs whose relics were enclosed may be ascertained and, perhaps, some facts about their lives could be narrated.

In any case, from canon 1201 §2, the titular of the high altar must always be the titular of the church, and accordingly the surprise sometimes

expressed that a church dedicated to Saint "N" has no altar of Saint "N" is based on a misunderstanding. Devotion to the patron saint is rightly expressed by devotion to his altar—the high altar; nor does this conflict with the notion explained above that the altar represents Christ. Throughout the rite of consecration, the phrase occurs in various forms: "in honorem Dei et in memoriam Sancti 'N'", and also invocations as "O Sancte Sanctorum Deus"; the saints hear our petitions in the vision of God.

The rite of its consecration presupposes that the altar, as such, will be an object of popular devotion: "Sit in hoc ergo altari innocentiae cultus; immoletur superbia, iracundia juguletur, luxuria omnisque libido feriatur. . . . Hic fideles populi vota persolvant. Hic peccatorum onera solvantur fidelesque lapsi reparentur . . . aegroti sanentur, infirmi recuperentur, claudi curentur, leprosi mudentur . . . ut omni tempore hoc in loco supplicantis tibi familiae tuae anxietates releves, acgritudines cures, preces exaudias, vota suscipias, desiderata confirmes, postulata concedas."

(v) It is, very likely, unnecessary to mention that many of the ideas set out above can be deftly accommodated to suitable appeals for funds. The consecration rite itself contains an allusion from the bishop on the subject which is a model of its kind: "Dabis impio militi quod non vis dare sacerdoti, etc."

III. THE BAPTISMAL FONT

(i) The rite of blessing holy water speaks of God having established, for our salvation, the greatest sacraments—maxima sacramenta—in the substance of water, and the Ritual contains no less than sixteen additional formulae for various blessings of water. Or consider the numerous holy wells and springs venerated by the faithful as at Lourdes or Holywell.

The most necessary of all things for bodily life, its cleansing and cooling qualities make it a natural religious symbol, and it has always been used as such in the religious rites of Jews and even of pagans. Easily obtainable, obviously "significant" of purification, Christ Our Lord chose it for the sacrament of regeneration. It is the entrance into the mysteries of the Christian faith.

(ii) The Church proceeds to the blessing of the font on Holy Saturday, in the words of the antiphon used, as a hart panting after the fountains of water. All the ancient rites, both on this occasion and whenever baptism is solemnly administered, have been tenaciously retained by the Church, notwithstanding the fact that "infant" baptism has, to a large extent, obscured their meaning. The faithful will not usually be very interested in obsolete customs of the early Church, about which there is still some uncertainty,¹ unless they still continue in some recognizable form and can be used to stir up faith and devotion. They will easily appreciate, particularly converts, that a long period of preparation and instruction, comparable in some ways to the novitiate before religious profession, necessarily preceded baptism. Examinations or "scrutinies" occurred at various times during

¹ Schuster in *The Sacramentary*, Vol. I, pp. 12-25, or Villien in *The History and Liturgy of the Sacraments*, pp. 1-63, give a good readable account of the subject.

this period, accompanied by one or other of the ceremonies which are now grouped all together at one time whenever baptism is solemnly administered. The Lenten Masses still retain traces of these "scrutinies" as on Wednesday in the fourth week of Lent, a mere glance at which is sufficient to appreciate its meaning : the many references to being cleansed by water and the gospel pericope of the blind man at the pool of Siloe.

(iii) A talk about the baptistery will be more effective in those churches which have a worthy font ; it will be less apposite, except as leading up to an appeal, in those parish churches which *mirabile dictu* have no font of any description, and where solemn baptism is administered from a bottle of baptismal water kept in the sacristy.

The costly and magnificent baptisteries which are still to be seen in many places date from times when baptism was reserved to the bishop, as the absolute solemn baptism of adults still is, in principle, from canon 744. As the numbers seeking initiation increased, baptisteries were erected in other than cathedral churches, but they retained the features of the primitive ones : situated near the porch or narthex of the church, often in a separate building, since the full right of entering the church itself belongs only to the baptised ; the floor a couple of steps lower than that of the church, reminiscent of baptism by immersion, when the candidate "descended" into the font, "buried together with Christ" (Romans vi, 3) ; protected by a locked railing and surmounted by an ornate cover or canopy, in order to show honour to a thing which, after the altar, is the most sacred in the church.

(iv) From amongst the many types or symbols illustrating Christian baptism, and still mentioned in liturgical prayers, those could be chosen which, perhaps, actually appear in the baptistery of the church, or are carved upon the font. The commonest are : the Ark and the dove over the waters (Genesis vi-viii) ; Israelites passing to safety through the Red Sea (Exodus, xiv) ; Moses striking the rock (Numbers xx) ; Naaman bathing in the Jordan (IV Kings v) ; the hart (Psalm xli) ; the dove at Christ's baptism (John i, 32) ; the ancient "fish" symbol. The commonest of all "figures" and the only one recommended in the Ritual is that of St. John baptising Our Lord.

(v) From the beginning of Christianity initiation into its mysteries comprised baptism (burial with Christ) and imposition of hands (receiving the Holy Spirit) ; hence the sacrament was publicly administered, and the font blessed, as it still is, at Easter and Pentecost, but the former predominated. The custom of baptizing solemnly at the Epiphany, of which our liturgy still has many traces, seems never to have been a common practice in the West. Easter Week, with its references to the newly baptized in the Masses and its culmination on *Dominica in Albis*, still preserves a devotional remembrance of baptism and the font : the recipients of this sacrament used to proceed processionally each evening to the place of their regeneration.

The baptistery of any church is always a reminder to the faithful of the obligations assumed therein, and many contain inscriptions to that effect, e.g. the fifth century inscription in the Lateran baptistery : "coelorum regnum sperate hoc fonte renati". Are we faithful to the promises made therein on our behalf? Have we carried our baptism without blame, worn the garment without stain? Are sponsors completely oblivious of their charges? Do parents unduly delay baptism of their children? Quite a

good question to put to oneself when passing a baptistery is *Quid petis ab Ecclesia Dei?* People sometimes expect from the Church only the solution of earthly problems, the remedy for international strife, social benefits, charitable assistance in distress; they almost forget that what they came for and have got is the Catholic faith.

If necessary, it is appropriate to inform the people that they should at least give external veneration to their font—not use it as a hat-rack, nor the baptistery as a place for oddments of ecclesiastical furniture.

IV. THE PARISH

The following notes may, perhaps, provide a background for use when it is desired to urge the faithful to take an active part in parochial activities: S.V.P., after-care of the young, clubs, confraternities; or at the induction of a parish priest.

(i) The parish does not appear in ecclesiastical organization until, the Church having evangelized towns and villages from the episcopal centre, these new cells of life became sufficiently strong to exist by themselves. In the cathedral city all the lesser churches with their clergy long remained entirely dependent on the bishop; “*haec commixtio etc.*” of the Mass is a survival of the *fermentum*, the portion of the host broken off and sent to these dependent clergy as a sign of their union with the chief pastor of the city. But in the surrounding country districts the same complete dependence on the bishop could not be maintained, owing to their distance from him, and self-supporting units each with its own church and priest—parishes—emerged much earlier than was the case in the cities. In France, for example, country parishes can be traced to the fifth century; town parishes did not exist earlier than the eleventh century.

Usually, with a little inquiry, the remote origins of one’s own parish may be discovered: a monthly Mass in a room; a chapel-of-ease dependent on a neighbouring mother church; a resident priest and permanent church. The development of the Church in England since the Reformation has been through Mass centres—chapels of ambassadors and of the nobility—mission churches. It was not till 1918 that normal parochial organization functioned everywhere. But even on foreign missions the Church aims at securing, as far as possible, the division of a territory or vicariate into portions, each with its responsible priest.

(ii) Owing to a variety of reasons non-parochial churches, secular and regular, have existed for centuries, especially in the towns, side by side with the parish churches, secular and regular, and there is abundant need for their influence amongst the teeming masses of the people. In modern times the tendency of the law of the Church is to permit the faithful to worship God where they please, and many obligations which formerly had to be fulfilled in the parish church may now be fulfilled elsewhere: e.g. Sunday precept or Paschal communion. The parish system, like the sabbath, was made for man, not man for the parish system. When, owing to the demands of economic and social life, people are frequently changing their abode, children attending schools away from the parish, and young people joining societies for education or recreation which have no parochial connection, it is

inevitable that many of the faithful do not even know the way to their own parish church. Certain definite parochial rights are still maintained by the law as set out in canon 462, particularly as regards baptism, marriage and the last sacraments. But, as in the earlier centuries, so it is still. The country and suburban districts have churches—whether secular or regular is irrelevant—which provide exclusively for all the spiritual needs of the faithful; which are really and actually, not merely nominally and legally, parish churches; which all the faithful frequent as a matter of course because there is no other, and which are the sources whence the religious life of the whole place flows. In such districts is fully verified everything that can be said of the parish as the cell of ecclesiastical life.

(iii) "For the greater security and salvation of souls . . . that the priest may know his own people" the Council of Trent (Sess. xxiv, c. 13) ordered the establishment of parishes even in towns with abundant clergy and churches, though not to the exclusion of other provision. The relations between parish priest and people reflect, in miniature, those existing between the bishop and his diocese. He is, in a sense, wedded to his parish, as a bishop to his diocese, and all the details of the law on benefices rest on this notion. Cf. St. John Fisher: "I would not leave my poor old wife (Rochester) for the richest widow in Christendom". John x, 11-16, the gospel of Good Shepherd Sunday, offers many reflections on the "care of souls". The parish priest has it in union with his bishop, the bishop in union with the Holy Father who is the Vicar of Christ. In close union with their priest, all the people of the place enter closely and easily into the great stream of spiritual activity flowing through the Mystical Body of Christ which is the Church. Cf. the bishop's prayer at the visitation of a parish: "O God who dost visit the lowly and comfort them with a Father's love, pour forth Thy grace upon us who are here assembled, that through those in whom Thou dwellest, we may feel Thy presence in ourselves." Avoid exaggeration by remembering that the bishop is the person in whom the pastoral office exists *iure divino*. He can for the good of souls divide, unite and dismember parishes, withdraw institutions from the care of the parish priest, or establish non-parochial churches and oratories contiguous to the parish church.

(iv) Considerations likely to encourage people to use the parish church always and not only when the law compels them are: (a) The fittingness of being present at the Mass which the parish priest is bound to offer on Sundays and other days expressly for them; (b) The social character of the public offices performed in the parish church as acts of corporate worship. The liturgical "movement" in Belgium and France has largely developed through getting the people to perceive its value and strength in the parishes. Benedict XV was particularly anxious that parochial life, which was the strength of the French Church in the past, should be renewed. (c) The parish priest has the burden of safeguarding the education of children in the parish and caring for the sick and afflicted: the faithful who assist and encourage him co-operate in this apostolic work—Catholic Action. (d) Since the parish church is required by law to provide certain means of sanctification e.g. Confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament and Christian Doctrine, parishioners are expected to take advantage of what is offered to them. (e) A spirit of complete loyalty to the Church will give heed not merely to

the commands but to the counsels and advice of authority : the faithful are advised in canon 467 §2, if they can conveniently do so, to attend the divine offices and hear the word of God frequently in their parish church.

(v) "Parochial spirit" has sometimes a thoroughly bad meaning : a narrow outlook which regards parochial organization as an end instead of a means, a restricted view which sees only the needs of one's own neighbourhood and is oblivious of the Church as a whole. In its proper sense it means a broad charity which urges individuals to subordinate their private preferences to the collective good ; which takes pride in seeing every parish activity grow and flourish ; which supports the parish priest by word and deed or, at least, refrains from public criticism of his actions, for the same reason that the children of a house love and respect their father.

E. J. MAHONEY.

NOTES ON RECENT WORK

ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

IF any of the new "Present Problems" series of booklets is destined for immortality, it can safely be said that Mgr. Messner's *Man's Suffering and God's Love*¹ is the one so destined. The author faces the problem of suffering squarely. He offers the only adequate solution, which is the Christian one ; though, in parenthesis as it were, he shows that all great creative work in human life and art has been due to suffering. "They," he writes, "to whom mankind gazes upward as to its greatest, they value suffering above everything."

The Christian solution is the solution of the Cross. From the natural standpoint suffering has a paramount value in life ; but for Christianity suffering is life itself, superhuman, divine life. For the divine life is charity ; and suffering is the expression of God's love for man and of man's love for God and man. So the Cross teaches ; for on Calvary Divine love and human pain were at their highest ; and they met and were made one in the one Person of the Word made flesh.

The theme of God's love runs through these pages. With rare insight and with great beauty of style the author unfolds the theme in all its variations. He explains how faith and hope become real and prayer attains its heights ; in each case it is through the living, penetrating influence of suffering. He explains what doing the Will of God means, how it is nothing else than correspondence with the love of our heavenly Father, giving strength to act and strength to suffer. He shows how self-surrender to God, which is true holiness, must be suffering to carnal, worldly man. He shows how the Mystical Body must be in harmony with its Head, carrying on His redemptive work through pain. Hence not only individuals but nations also must tread the winepress, that Christ may be formed in them, and sin be cast out and atoned for.

¹ Translated by Sheila Wheatley. Edited with a Foreword by His Grace the Archbishop of Liverpool. (Burns Oates & Washbourne. Wrapper, 2s. Cloth, 3s. 6d.)

Mgr. Messner writes from the heart, with understanding sympathy. He is of the company of those priests of whom he says that their "word must breathe the home-giving warmth, which love learns only in suffering. It must hold the echo that comes from the darkness, the nights, the abyss of grief and dereliction you have suffered."

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost, by Bernard J. Kelly, C.S.Sp.,¹ explains the theological character of each Gift after the teaching of St. Thomas. But it is not a merely scholastic book. It is largely non-technical in its treatment. The author writes for the average reader of average intelligence, and from a practical angle, showing the need, purpose and activity of the Gifts; and the average reader, if he has patience to be interested in the science of the spiritual life, will understand the book without undue difficulty. Fr. Kelly rightly finds the key to the whole theology of the Gifts in the basic relation of adopted son to Father which grace establishes between man and God. The Gifts are God's means of educating His sons until they become in outlook and action worthy members of His intimate family. Hence the Gifts are not just the perquisites of those called to contemplation or merely the instruments of spiritual heroism. They will indeed lead the faithful soul to contemplative prayer and heroic virtue. But they are with every soul in grace from the beginning and they are operative right through its life. Fr. Kelly has given us a very timely and useful book.

*As I Have Loved You*² is the last work from the pen of Fr. John Kearney, C.S.Sp. The gifted author died last year, leaving behind several books of devotion, which have proved their worth by the influence for good which they have had with very many souls. The present work, like the others, is a book of meditations. It is a simple and practical exposition of the greatest of the commandments. In the first part the author explains the motive of charity, namely God's love for man; in the second he analyses the virtue of fraternal charity in itself and in all its bearings on human conduct. We recommend most earnestly this book which traces the high road of the spiritual life. No one who has pondered over its contents will ever again misunderstand the true nature of holiness. He will not regard mere asceticism or an ordered life or much praying as the essential form of perfection. But he will also have no illusions about the difficulty of practising the greatest of the commandments.

*Some Mysteries of Jesus Christ*³ is another of Fr. Vincent McNabb's books of thoughts for meditation. The many who have found stimulating help in other similar books of the author will give a warm welcome to this. Fr. McNabb ranges over Bethlehem, Nazareth, Galilee, Christ's Divinity and Humility, His Prayer, Teaching, Miracles, Tears, and Temptation in the Desert. As in any book of this kind many of the thoughts are excellent, some are mediocre, and others of no great value. One thought at least I must confess not to like. It is the opening thought on Bethlehem; to say the least, it is overbold.

Seeking for Trouble, by Margaret T. Monro⁴, has as its sub-title "Saints for Christian Civilization". It is a study of Catholic sanctity as it can be of

¹ Sheed & Ward. Pp. ix+134. 5s.

² Burns Oates & Washbourne. P. 287. 7s.

³ Burns Oates & Washbourne. Pp. xiv+54. 2s. 6d.

⁴ Longmans. P. 216. Wrapper, 5s.

use in the post-war social reconstruction. The "Troubles" are the several contributions to social order which the Church has made in the past ; not any contributions, but the provocative ones, unexpected and not understood by the natural man, but distinctive of the Church ; namely, Virginity, Martyrdom, Poverty, Penitence, Religious Institutions, Christian Civilization. There is a very good introduction on the Social Values of Asceticism. The nature of each of these special Christian virtues or influences is explained ; and each is illustrated by the life of one or two saints who typify it. They are all ancient saints, except St. Thomas Aquinas, who stands for Christian Civilization. Hence not all that these saints did could be done today ; there is, for instance, the case of St. Simeon Stylites. For, like everyone else, saints are to some extent creatures of their age and locality. But, allowing for such differences, the lesson comes out clearly, that the modern world requires saints who understand it and can mould it. This is the lesson which M. Maritain has so often preached.

Father John Sullivan, S.J., by the Rev. Fergal McGrath, S.J.¹, is the life of a distinguished convert lawyer, son of Sir Edward Sullivan, who was Lord Chancellor of Ireland during the latter part of last century. The biography contains much valuable and interesting information on the Ireland of those days. Fr. McGrath has been at pains to collect all the available materials for his life. He has perhaps gone to too great a length, but he has succeeded in giving a clear portrait of a man remarkable for his ascetic life and his devotion to the Passion and the poor.

The Benedictines of Princethorpe have recently published a life of St. Benedict.² It is a new translation, made by Dom Justin McCann, of the Second Book of the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great.

J. CARTMELL.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

GENERIC CONFESSION OF PAST SINS

Devout people who confess regularly often have no sins to mention. May they be permitted, after confessing merely imperfections, to add : "I confess again all the sins of my past life," or must they specify what these past sins are, e.g. "all the sins of anger in my past life" ? (J.M.)

REPLY

It is a question of what the writers call "free" matter, by which is meant venial sins not directly remitted and all sins, mortal or venial, committed in one's past life and already remitted by absolution. Obviously without matter of some kind the absolution is of no avail.

¹ Longmans. P. 285. 8s. 6d.

² Princethorpe Priory, Rugby. 1s.

(i) For the *validity* of absolution there is practical unanimity amongst all the modern writers in teaching that the confession of past sins, whether mortal or venial, as "free" matter, suffices even when the accusation is generic, e.g. I am sorry for all the sins of my past life. The proof of this is that since generic confession suffices, for grave reasons, even when the matter is "necessary", e.g. at a general absolution of troops or when a dying person can do no more, it must be held to suffice *a fortiori* when the matter is "free".

(ii) But the writers are not agreed whether it is *lawful* to confess "free" matter generically unless there is some excusing cause. For the most part they consider the practice to be venially wrong, because there is some danger that the penitent will not have contrition for sins mentioned generically, and because the confessor cannot rightly form a judgement therefrom; moreover, it is not the common practice of the faithful to confess past sins in this way. Thus Prümmer, *Theologia Moralis*, III, §325.

The opposite view is, nevertheless, taught by writers of repute, e.g. Génicot, II, §262, and it may be accepted as probable, the reason being that the Tridentine law of specific confession refers only to mortal sins not yet directly remitted.

(iii) Our own view is that, in publicly instructing the faithful, this probable opinion should not be taught: they should follow the common practice and from motives of humility, when having nothing except "free" matter to present, should confess more specifically some past sins for which they are really sorry. But, since the tribunal of Penance is one of mercy and peace, it is unwise to disturb the minds of penitents by refusing to accept a generic accusation of past "free" matter. The obligation of being more precise, if any, is admittedly not a grave one, and it is admittedly not binding if there is some excusing cause: a sufficient cause exists, we think, in the desire not to question a penitent unduly and thereby, perhaps, discourage the habit of frequent confession. Moreover, it cannot too easily be supposed that what are commonly called "imperfections" contain no trace of venial sin: there is usually some sloth or vanity attached to them which may be regarded as sufficient matter for sacramental absolution. A scrupulous confessor could, in practice, evade the whole difficulty by saying before absolution: "Renew your sorrow for these things and for the sins against charity in your past life."

ERECTION OF STATIONS OF THE CROSS

On applying to the episcopal curia for a faculty to erect the Stations I was informed that it would be necessary to obtain it from the Holy See: the Ordinary enjoys this privilege but he may not communicate it even *per modum actus*, and by "Ordinary" in this connection is meant the Bishop but not the Vicar-General. What is the canonical reason accounting for these restrictions? (W.)

REPLY

Canon 349 §1.1: Ab accepta authentica notitia peractae canonicae provisionis, Episcopi sive residentiales sive titulares: praeter alia privilegia

quae suis in titulis recensentur fruuntur privilegiis de quibus in Can. 239, §1, nn. 7-12; nec non . . . nn. 5, 6, ritibus tamen ab Ecclesia praescriptis. (Canon 239, §1, 6, contains the privilege of erecting Stations.)

Canon 66, §2: Nisi in earum concessione electa fuerit industria personae aut aliud expresse cautum sit, facultates habituales . . . concessae Episcopo competunt quoque Vicario Generali.

Canon 368, §1: Vicario Generali, vi officii, ea competit in universa dioecesi iurisdictio in spiritualibus ac temporalibus, quae ad episcopum iure ordinario pertinent, exceptis iis quae Episcopus sibi reservaverit, vel quae ex iure requirant speciale Episcopi mandatum.

Canon 913: Inferiores Romano Pontifice nequeunt facultatem concedendi indulgentias aliis committere, nisi id eis a Sede Apostolica expresse fuerit indultum.

Sacra Poenitentiaria Apostolica, die 18 iulii 1919, declaravit, non licere Episcopis communicare Presbyteris suae ditionis habitualiter potestatem benedicendi Rosaria, etc., de qua in can. 349, §1, n. 1, Codicis iuris canonici, cum Indulgentiarum applicatione; nunc quaeritur:

"1. Licetne Episcopis communicare, saltem per modum actus, Sacerdotibus suae ditionis facultates, de quibus in can. 349, §1, n. 1, Codicis iuris canonici?"

"2. Eadem facultates competuntne etiam Vicario Generali?"

Et eadem *Sacra Poenitentiaria*, re mature perpensa, respondendum censuit:

Ad utrumque *Negative*.

Datum Romae, in *Sacra Poenitentiaria*, die 10 novembris 1926.

(i) A faculty is necessary for erecting Stations because of the Indulgences attached thereto. In so far as the privileges mentioned in Canons 349 and 239 concern indulgences, it is quite clear that the law of Canon 913 forbids their communication to any person whatever without an Apostolic indult for the purpose.

But there is a further reason applicable to all the privileges of Canon 349, §1, 1, and not merely to those which are concerned with indulgences. It is to be discerned in the fact that the powers conferred on bishops in this canon are "privileges" not "ordinary" powers: they are given as a mark of honour to one who has received episcopal consecration and therefore apply to titular as well as to residential bishops. The *Sacred Penitentiary* as early as 18 July, 1919, decided that these powers could not be communicated *habitually* to other priests,¹ and the reply of 10 November, 1926, declares that they cannot be given even *per modum actus*,² because the same principle applies in either case. If these powers were enjoyed from "ordinary" jurisdiction it would follow automatically from Canon 199, §1, that they are capable of delegation, "nisi aliud expresse iure caveatur". From the definition of "ordinary" jurisdiction in Canon 196 it appeared to many, before the point was settled by the Holy See, that certain of the powers in Canon 349, §1, 1, could be delegated, and it must be admitted that there is a very thin line of difference between powers which are "ordinary" and those which are annexed *de iure* to an office as a "privilege".

¹ *A.A.S.*, 1919, xi, p. 332; *Periodica*, 1921, x, p. 95.

² *A.A.S.*, 1926, xviii, p. 500; *Periodica*, 1926, xv, p. 234.

However, the clause in Canon 199, §1, "nisi aliud, etc.", makes ample provision for restrictions on the communication even of powers which are indisputably "ordinary", and these restrictions are now expressly established.

(ii) Exactly the same line of reasoning must be employed with regard to the Vicar-General. Canon 368 declares his competence to exercise whatever powers the Bishop possesses through "ordinary" jurisdiction; but the list in Canon 349, §1, 1, is an enumeration of "privileges" not of "ordinary" powers; therefore they are not enjoyed by the Vicar-General.

But, it may be objected, Canon 66, §2, is within a title headed "De Privilegiis" and it asserts the Vicar-General's competence to exercise faculties, e.g. the Quinquennial Faculties, granted to his bishop. It does so, however, with the clause "nisi aliud, etc.", which is now clearly verified in the reply of the *Sacred Penitentiary*, 10 November, 1926.

(iii) An alternative method of erecting Stations exists, namely, the Superiors of the Friars Minor may delegate a priest of the Order to erect them, but not other priests since the decree of 20 March, 1933. The permission of the local Ordinary should be obtained, but it is no longer necessary for the validity of the act. If it is thought surprising that a Franciscan superior may do what a bishop may not do, i.e. delegate the power to erect Stations, one must remember that the Stations have been associated for centuries with the Order of Friars Minor, and their intervention used to be necessary in all erections. Moreover, it is open to any Ordinary to seek from the Holy See the faculty of delegating his own power, enjoyed from Canon 349, §1, 1, and this faculty is included in the *pagella* issued to bishops by *C.S. de Propaganda Fide*.

The question, as in everything affecting Indulgences, is complicated owing to the frequent changes and modifications which are introduced from time to time. For a statement on the present law of erecting Stations the reader is referred to this REVIEW, 1939, XVII, p. 544.

BISHOP'S THRONE

May it be said that the restrictions which formerly existed are now abolished by Canon 337, §3, and that any bishop who is the local Ordinary may concede the use of his episcopal throne to any other bishop? (11.)

REPLY

The restrictions are still in force as may be seen by comparing the following texts:

S.R.C., 12 June, 1899 (n. 4023): An Episcopus Dioecesanus gaudeat iure cedendi Thronum suum alteri episcopo cum Reverendissimorum Canonicorum adistentia sibi debita? *Affirmative*; dummodo Episcopus invitatus non sit ipsius dioecesani Coadiutor, aut Auxiliaris, aut Vicarius Generalis, aut etiam dignitas seu canonicus in illius ecclesiis. Sicut autem Cardinales Episcopi Suburbicarii alique Titulares Ecclesiarum Urbis Purpuratis tantum Patribus Thronum cedere possunt; ita Praesules Car-

dinales aliarum Dioecesium decet ut suum Thronum nonnisi aliis eadem Cardinalitia dignitate ornatis cedant.

Canon 337, §3: Episcopus, licentiam concedens pontificalia exercendi in suo territorio, potest quoque permittere usum throni cum baldachino.

S.R.C., 26 November, 1919 (n. 4355, v. 3): Attento can. 337, §3, Codicis I.C., manetne in suo robore Decretum S.R.C., n. 4023, diei 12 Junii 1899, super iure Episcoporum Dioecesanorum cedendi thronum alteri Episcopo? Affirmative.

PARISH HALL IN CHURCH BASEMENT

In many places a hall for parochial purposes exists beneath the Church. Is this quite in order? Are there any limits to the purposes for which the hall may be used? (D.)

REPLY

Canon 1164, §2: In ecclesia nullus aperiatur aditus vel fenestra ad laicorum domus; locaque, si adsint, subter ecclesiae pavementum aut supra ecclesiam ad usum mere profanum ne adhibeantur.

S.R.C., 4 May, 1882, n. 3546: (Orator) exposuit nonnulla quaesita quoad subterranea loca Ecclesiarum quae in eiusdem Archidioecesi brevi consecrandae sunt; ubi spectacula, theatri more, ad iuventutem praesertim honeste exercendam peragenda essent . . . Resp. Non licere, utpote quod Ecclesia cum sua parte subterranea consecratur per modum unius.

(i) The common law prohibits the basement of a church to be used for purely profane purposes, by which is clearly meant the *finis operis* not the *finis operantis*: A variety show or a dance is "profane" even though the proceeds support some religious work; S.R.C., n. 3156, ad V prohibits a church basement to be used as a wine cellar. The reason is that the basement forms part of the building and shares in its consecration.

Its use as a library or as a meeting room for parish confraternities and conferences on religious subjects is clearly not forbidden;¹ nor *a fortiori*, it would seem, is its use as a Catholic school. Cf. Beste, *Introductio in Codicem*, p. 558.

(ii) There are many examples of parish halls beneath churches in this country, and these halls are commonly used indiscriminately for all purposes of business or entertainment, like any separate parish hall.

This departure from the common law may be justified on various titles, and we must assume that some justification exists in every case, since the practice is sanctioned by the local Ordinary. There may be, firstly, a custom which the Ordinary cannot easily abolish, according to the terms of Canon 5: to deprive a parish of the only hall it possesses would certainly be a difficult thing to do prudently. Secondly, an indult may have been obtained when the building was erected. The *Regulae* issued 29 June, 1908, reprinted in *Fontes*, n. 6459, indicate that the *Congregation of the Council*

¹ Claeys-Bouvaert, *Manuale Iuris Canonici*, III, n. 8.

is competent to dispense the first part of the law in Canon 1164, §2 (p. 528, n. 4, f.), and the same may be said, it seems, for the latter part. It should also be observed that the *non licere* of S.R.C., n. 3546, refers actually to the lawfulness of consecrating a church the basement of which is being used for a profane purpose; therefore, many of the commentators are prepared to permit certain border-line practices, or to interpret the law as widely as possible in necessitous cases, whenever it is a question of a non-consecrated church.¹

E. J. M.

ROMAN DOCUMENT

ALLOCUTION²

of the Sovereign Pontiff to a concourse of women of Catholic Action and their helpers from all the dioceses of Italy, on the Feast of Christ the King, 26 November, 1941 (*A.A.S.*, 1941, xxxiii, pp. 450-458.)

As We look round upon this splendid gathering of mothers, teaching sisters, school-mistresses, representatives of the children of Italian Catholic Action and others who devote themselves to the work of education, Our thoughts go beyond the threshold of this hall, beyond the confines of Italy, and reach to the ends of the earth as We embrace all those dear children who are the flower of the human race and the joy of their mothers' hearts.³ At the same time We are mindful of the immortal Pope Pius XI who in his Encyclical *Divini illius magistri* of 31 December, 1929, treated so profoundly of the Christian education of the young. Dealing with this important subject he judiciously allocated the parts which belong respectively to the Church, the family and the State, and then went on regretfully to observe that parents are often unprepared or ill-equipped for their work as educators. Accordingly, and since the limits of that lucid and exhaustive document did not permit him to deal in detail with education in the home, he exhorted in the name of Christ all pastors of souls "to use every means, by catechism and instruction, by word of mouth and in widely published writings, to ensure that Christian parents are well instructed both in general and in particular regarding their duties in the religious, moral and civic education of their children, and regarding the best methods—apart from their own example—of attaining that end."⁴

In so exhorting the pastors of souls the great Pontiff was exhorting parents also, fathers and mothers alike. But We believe that We are acting in accordance with the desire of Our venerated Predecessor in reserving this special audience for mothers and other teachers of children. It is true that when We speak to the newly wed Our words are addressed also to you;

¹ *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, 1930, p. 503; Coronata, *Institutiones*, II, n. 733.

² Translated from the original Italian by G. D. S.

³ Cf. Ps. cxii, 9.

⁴ Cf. *A.A.S.*, xxii, 1930, pp. 73-4.

nevertheless We are glad to have this opportunity of speaking to you in a special way, dearly beloved daughters, because We see in mothers, and in their expert and pious helpers, those who exert the earliest and the most intimate influence upon the souls of little ones and upon their growth in piety and virtue.

We need not delay to remind you how important and how necessary is this work of education in the home, and how grave a mother's obligation not to neglect it or perform it with indifference. Speaking as We are to our beloved daughters of Catholic Action We can have no doubt that they regard this obligation as the first of their duties as Christian mothers, and as a task in which none can fully take their place. But it is not enough to be conscious of an obligation and to have the desire to discharge it; it is necessary also to render oneself capable of discharging it competently.

The need of serious preparation for the difficult work of education

It is a curious circumstance and, as Pope Pius XI remarked in his Encyclical, a lamentable one, that whereas no one would dream of suddenly becoming a mechanic or an engineer, a doctor or a lawyer, without any apprenticeship or preparation, yet every day there are numbers of young men and women who marry without having given an instant's thought to preparing themselves for the arduous work of educating their children which awaits them. And yet, if St. Gregory the Great could speak of the government of souls as "the art of arts"¹, surely no art is more difficult and strenuous than that of fashioning the souls of children; for these souls are so very tender, so easily disfigured through some thoughtless influence or wrong advice, so difficult to guide aright and so lightly led astray, more susceptible than wax to receive a disastrous and indelible impression through malignant influences or culpable neglect. Fortunate the child whose mother stands by its cradle like a guardian angel to inspire and lead it in the path of goodness! And so while We congratulate you upon what you have already achieved, We cannot but exhort you warmly and anew to develop those splendid organizations which are doing so much to provide for every rank and social class educators conscious of their high mission, in mind and bearing alert against evil and zealous to promote good. Such sentiments in a woman and a mother give her the right to that reverence and dignity which belong to a man's loyal helpmeet; such a mother is like a pillar, for she is the central support of the home; she is like a beacon whose light gives an example to the parish and brings illumination to the pious associations of which she is a member.

The mother's work of training during infancy

Especially opportune are those organizations of your Union of Catholic Action which seek to help and train the young wife before childbearing and during the infancy of her offspring. In this you are doing an angel's work, watching over the mother and the little one she bears within her,² and then, when the baby comes, standing by the cot to help the mother as with breast

¹ *Regula pastor.* lib. 1, c. 1.

² Cf. S. Th. I, 115, §, ad 2.

and smile she feeds body and soul of the tiny angel that heaven has sent her. To woman God has given the sacred mission, painful yet how joyous,¹ of maternity; and to her too, more than to anyone else, is entrusted the first education of the child in its early months and years. Of heredity, which may exercise such an influence upon the future cast of a child's character, we will not speak—except to say that this hidden heritage sometimes points an accusing finger at the irregular life of the parents, who are thus gravely responsible for making it difficult for their offspring to lead a truly Christian life. Fathers and mothers, whose mutual love is sanctified by the faith of Christ, see that before your child is born you prepare a pure family atmosphere in which it may open its eyes to light and its soul to life, so that the good odour of Christ may linger about every step of its moral development.

Mothers, your sensibility is greater and your love more tender, and therefore you will keep a vigilant eye upon your babies throughout their infancy, watching over their growth and over the health of their little bodies, for this is flesh of your flesh and the fruit of your womb. Remember that your children are the adopted sons of God and specially beloved of Christ; remember that their angels look for ever on the face of the heavenly Father;² and so you too as you rear them must be angels in like manner, in all your care and vigilance keeping your eyes fixed upon heaven. It is your task from the cradle to begin their education in soul as well as in body; for if you do not educate them they will begin, for good or ill, to educate themselves. Many of the moral characteristics which you see in the youth or the man owe their origin to the manner and circumstances of his first upbringing in infancy: purely organic habits contracted at that time may later prove a serious obstacle to the spiritual life of the soul. And so you will make it your special care in the treatment of your child to observe the prescriptions of a perfect hygiene, so that when it comes to the use of reason its bodily organs and faculties will be healthy and robust and free from distorted tendencies. This is the reason why, except where it is quite impossible, it is most desirable that the mother should feed her child at her own breast. Who shall say what mysterious influences are exerted upon the growth of that little creature by the mother upon whom it depends entirely for its development!

Have you observed those little eyes, wide open, restlessly questioning, their glance darting from this thing to that, following a movement or a gesture, already expressing joy or pain, anger and obstinacy, and giving other signs of those little passions that nestle in the heart of man even before the tiny lips have learned to utter a word? This is perfectly natural. Notwithstanding what certain thinkers have maintained, we are not born endowed with knowledge or with the memories and dreams of a life already lived. The mind of the child as it comes forth from its mother's womb is a page upon which nothing is written; from hour to hour as it passes on its way from the cradle to the tomb its eyes and other senses, internal and external, transmit the life of the world through their own vital activity, and will write upon that page the images and ideas of the things among which it lives. Hence an irresistible instinct for truth and goodness turns "the simple soul that nothing knows"³ upon the things of sense; and all these powers

¹ Cf. John xvi, 21.

² Cf. Matt. xviii, 10.

³ Dante, *Purg.*, XVI, 88.

of feeling, all these childish sensations, by way of which mind and will come gradually to their awakening, need to be educated, trained, carefully guided, otherwise the normal awakening and proper direction of these noble faculties of the spirit will be compromised and distorted. From that early age a loving look, a warning word must teach the child not to yield to all its impressions, and as reason dawns it must learn to discriminate and to master the vagaries of its sensations ; in a word, under the guidance and admonition of the mother it must begin the work of its own education.

Study the child in his tender age. If you know him well you will educate him well ; you will not misconceive his character ; you will come to understand him, knowing when to give way and when to be firm ; a naturally good disposition does not fall to the lot of all the sons of men.

The training of the mind

Train the mind of your children. Do not give them wrong ideas or wrong reasons for things ; whatever their questions may be, do not answer them with evasions or untrue statements which their minds rarely accept ; but take occasion from them lovingly and patiently to train their minds, which want only to open to the truth and to grasp it with the first ingenuous gropings of their reasoning and reflective powers. Who can say what many a genius may not owe to the prolonged and trustful questionings of childhood at the home fireside !

The training of the character

Train the character of your children. Correct their faults, encourage and cultivate their good qualities and co-ordinate them with that stability which will make for resolution in after life. Your children, conscious as they grow up and as they begin to think and will, that they are guided by a good parental will, constant and strong, free from violence and anger, not subject to weakness or inconsistency, will learn in time to see therein the interpreter of another and higher will, the will of God, and so they will plant in their souls the seeds of those early moral habits which fashion and sustain a character, train it to self-control in moments of crisis and to courage in the face of conflict or sacrifice, and imbue it with a deep sense of Christian duty.

The training of the heart

Train their hearts. Frequently the decision of a man's destiny, the ruin of his character, or a grave danger threatening him, may be traced to his childish years when his heart was spoiled by the fond flattery, silly fussing and foolish indulgence of misguided parents. The impressionable little heart became accustomed to see all things revolve and gravitate around it, to find all things yielding to its will and caprice, and so there took root in it that boundless egoism of which the parents themselves were later to become the first victims ! All this is often the just penalty of the selfishness of parents who deny their only child the joy of having little brothers and sisters who, sharing in the mother's love, would have accustomed him to think of others besides himself. What deep and rich potentialities for love, goodness and devotion lie dormant in the heart of a child ! You, mothers,

must awaken them, foster them, direct them, raise them up to Him who will sanctify them, to Jesus ; to Jesus, and to Mary, their heavenly Mother, who will open the child's heart to piety, will teach it by prayer to offer its pure sacrifices and innocent victories to the divine Lover of little ones ; she will teach it to feel compassion for the poor and unhappy. How joyous is the springtime of childhood, unruffled by wind or storm !

The training of the will in adolescence

But the day will come when the childish heart will feel new impulses stirring within it ; new desires will disturb the serenity of those early years. In that time of trial, Christian mothers, remember that to train the heart means to train the will to resist the attacks of evil and the insidious temptations of passion ; during that period of transition from the unconscious purity of infancy to the triumphant purity of adolescence you have a task of the highest importance to fulfil. You have to prepare your sons and daughters so that they may pass with unflinching step, like those who pick their way among serpents, through that time of crisis and physical change ; and pass through it without losing anything of the joy of innocence, preserving intact that natural instinct of modesty with which Providence has girt them as a check upon wayward passion. That sense of modesty, which in its spontaneous abhorrence from the impure is akin to the sense of religion, is made of little account in these days ; but you, mothers, will take care that they do not lose it through indecency in dress or self-adornment, through unbecoming familiarities or immoral spectacles ; on the contrary you will seek to make it more delicate and alert, more upright and sincere. You will keep a watchful eye on their steps ; you will not suffer the whiteness of their souls to be stained and contaminated by corrupt and corrupting company ; you will inspire them with a high esteem and jealous love for purity, advising them to commend themselves to the sure and motherly protection of the Immaculate Virgin. Finally, with the discretion of a mother and a teacher, and thanks to the open-hearted confidence with which you have been able to inspire your children, you will not fail to watch for and to discern the moment in which certain unspoken questions have occurred to their minds and are troubling their senses. It will then be your duty to your daughters, the father's duty to your sons, carefully and delicately to unveil the truth as far as it appears necessary, to give a prudent, true and Christian answer to those questions, and set their minds at rest. If imparted by the lips of Christian parents, at the proper time, in the proper measure and with the proper precautions, the revelation of the mysterious and marvellous laws of life will be received by them with reverence and gratitude, and will enlighten their minds with far less danger than if they learned them haphazard, from some unpleasant shock, from secret conversations, through information received from over-sophisticated companions, or from clandestine reading, the more dangerous and pernicious as secrecy inflames the imagination and troubles the senses. Your words, if they are wise and discreet, will prove a safeguard and a warning in the midst of the temptations and the corruption which surround them, "because foreseen an arrow comes more slowly."¹

¹ Dante, *Par.*, XVII, 27.

The powerful aid of religion

But in this great work of the Christian education of your sons and daughters you well understand that training in the home, however wise, however thorough, is not enough. It needs to be supplemented and perfected by the powerful aid of religion. From the moment of baptism the priest possesses the authority of a spiritual father and a pastor over your children, and you must co-operate with him in teaching them those first rudiments of catechism and piety which are the only basis of a solid education, and of which you, the earliest teachers of your children, ought to have a sufficient and sure knowledge. You cannot teach what you do not know yourselves. Teach them to love God, to love Christ, to love our Mother the Church and the pastors of the Church who are your guides. Love the catechism and teach your children to love it; it is the great handbook of the love and fear of God, of Christian wisdom and of eternal life.

Valiant helpers in the work of education

In your work of education, which is many-sided, you will feel the need and the obligation of having recourse to others to help you: choose helpers who are Christians like yourselves, and choose them with all the care that is called for by the treasure which you are entrusting to them: you are committing to them the faith, the purity and the piety of your children. But when you have chosen them you must not think that you are henceforth liberated from your duty and your vigilance; you must co-operate with them. However eminent school-teachers may be in their profession they will have little success in the formation of your children without your collaboration—still less if instead of helping and lending support to their efforts you were to counteract and oppose them. What a misfortune it would be if at home your indulgence and fond weakness were to undo all that has been done at school, at catechism or in Catholic associations, to form the character and foster the piety of your children!

But—some mother may say—children are so difficult to manage nowadays! I can do nothing with that son of mine; that daughter of mine is impossible! Admittedly many boys and girls at the age of twelve or fifteen show themselves intractable. But why? Because when they were two or three years old they were allowed to do as they pleased. True, some temperaments are ungrateful and rebellious; but however unresponsive, however obstinate, he is still your child. Would you love him any the less than his brothers and sisters if he were sickly or deformed? God has given him to you; see that you do not treat him as the outcast of the family. No child is so unruly that he cannot be trained with care, patience and love; and it will rarely happen that even the stoniest and most unpromising soil will not bear some flower of submission and virtue, if only an unreasonable severity does not run the risk of exterminating the seed of good will which even the proudest soul has hidden within it. The whole education of your children would be ruined were they to discover in their parents—and their eyes are sharp enough to see—any signs of favouritism, undue preferences or antipathies in regard to any of them. For your own good and for the

good of the family it must be clear that, whether you use measured severity or give encouragement and caresses, you have an equal love for all, a love which makes no distinction save for the correction of evil or for the encouragement of good. Have you not received them all equally from God?

Teachers side by side with Christian mothers

Our words have been addressed principally to you, Christian mothers. But with you We see around us today a gathering of nuns, teachers and others engaged in the work of Christian education. They are mothers too, not by nature or by blood but by the love which they bear to the young, who are so dear to Christ and to His Spouse the Church. Yes, you too are mothers, you who work side by side with Christian mothers in the work of education; for you have a mother's heart, burning with the charity which the Holy Spirit has poured out in you. In this charity, which is the charity of Christ that presses you on the path of well-doing, you find your light, your comfort and the work that brings you so close to mothers, fathers and children. You gather together these living branches of society, these children who are the hope of their parents and of the Church, and form them into a great family of thousands and thousands of little ones; you develop the training of their minds, characters and hearts, bringing them up in a spiritual and moral atmosphere in which the joyousness of innocence appears side by side with faith in God and reverence for holy things, with a sense of duty towards parents and country. Our praise and gratitude, joined with the thanks of all mothers, go out to you in full measure. In your schools, homes, colleges and associations you emulate and continue the mother's work of training. You are truly a sisterhood of spiritual mothers whose offspring is the pure flower of youth.

Conclusion

Christian mothers and beloved daughters, of your incomparable mission—fraught in these days with so many difficulties and obstacles—We have been able only briefly to describe the glories. What a majestic figure is that of the mother in the home as she fulfils her destiny at the cradle side, the nurse and teacher of her little ones! Hers is truly a task full of labour, and We should be tempted to deem her unequal to it were it not for the grace of God which is ever at hand to enlighten, direct and sustain her in her daily anxieties and toil; were it not, too, for those other educators, mother-like in spirit and energy, whom she calls to aid her in the formation of these youthful souls. Imploring God to fill you to overflowing with His graces and to give increase to your manifold labours on behalf of the young entrusted to you, We grant you from Our heart, as a pledge of heavenly favours, Our fatherly Apostolic Benediction.

The section headed *The training of the will in adolescence* contains fuller and more detailed directions than those already given by the Holy See in the Encyclical, 31 December, 1929 (*Christian Education of Youth*. C.T.S., p. 31), and in the reply of the Holy Office, 21 March, 1931 (CLERGY REVIEW, 1931, I, p. 637). The latter is negative in character, condemning theories of

sexual education advocated by eugenists ; in the former it is rather implied that parental instruction is for the exceptional cases : "if, all things considered, some private instruction is found necessary and opportune."

In the present allocution parents are told to forestall the possibility of their children getting informed from undesirable sources by giving a true, prudent and Christian answer to the unspoken questions arising in the minds of the young. This papal utterance will set at rest the scruples of some few Catholic parents who have thought that a policy of complete secrecy and silence is the Catholic tradition.

E. J. M.

CHURCH MANAGEMENT

SOME PULPIT PRACTICES

It cannot be too often repeated that the ministry of the word is one of the most solemn of pastoral obligations. Preaching, more than any other clerical activity, is subject to the vagaries of fashion. Oratory is out of date, and it is doubtful whether at the present time much attention would be paid to a priest who preached in the grandiloquent manner of the renowned pulpit orators whose names, in the days of our fathers and grandfathers, never failed to draw. And how dull and insipid their published sermons seem now, except where the literary quality has exceptional value ! No doubt the personality of the preacher gave force to his spoken word. Whatever may be argued about the lack of interest in sermons nowadays, it remains true that in every parish there will be found a sufficiency of interested and thoughtful persons to make preaching well worth while. A good Catholic likes a good sermon. Moreover, even though the style has changed and pulpit oratory is no longer an attraction, on the whole the quality of preaching has improved so that there are fewer opportunities for the special preacher. His usefulness is more often reserved for occasions when the parish priest feels that his people could do with a fresh breeze.

What the faithful look for in these days is not the dry bones of controversy nor exhilarating draughts of effervescent eloquence, but plain statements of doctrine, well packed with information and seasoned with spirituality.

But the studied sermon is not the only spiritual repast which the pastoral preacher is required to administer. There are also the many precious fragments to be gathered up. It is desirable that there should be a short catechetical instruction at every Mass on a Sunday. For practical reasons it may happen that this cannot be done. In one diocese it has been suggested by authority that as an alternative a few questions and answers from the Catechism might be read, and in the experience of those who have adopted the practice, the results have been profitable.¹

Another helpful practice is to indicate, in as few words as possible, the

¹ It is hoped shortly to publish in the CLERGY REVIEW a series of brief Instruction Notes on the Catechism, by Fr. Drinkwater, which should prove useful to the clergy in this connection.—(EDITOR.)

leading ideas of difficult Epistles and Gospels, or the significance of a great feast. If we encourage our people to use the Missal, we should also help them by notifying changes in the Ordo. A recent innovation in some quarters is worth considering: at the principal Mass, after the notices, five-minute instruction is given on practical points in connection with such subjects as baptisms, churchings, marriages, sick-calls, attending non-Catholic places of worship; the sermon is then limited to about a quarter of an hour.

We lament that our people are not as familiar with the Holy Scriptures as they might be. It would be a wholesome exercise if at Sunday evening services during such solemn seasons as Advent, Lent and Paschal Time, we were to read from the pulpit the occurring Scripture of the Office.

J. P. R.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Reformation in England: Edward VI, 1547-1553. By G. Constant. Demy 8vo pp. ix+349. (Sheed & Ward. 16s.)

To judge from the difficulties they have had to surmount, the publishers have achieved something heroic in getting this book printed, bound and produced. The struggle has left an ugly scar, for the book comes too crippled, lacking any vestige of an index. This second volume of M. P. A. Constant's impressive survey of the history of the Reformation in England follows very closely the pattern of its predecessor, combining surveys of the political history of the period with a careful study of the development of religious teaching, the changes of religious formularies, and biographical sketches of the principal actors. The book is copiously annotated, and, at first sight, seems to be a most scholarly and solid piece of historical writing. With all its apparatus of learning, with its references to printed and even to manuscript sources, with its long bibliography and five other appendices it will rank for a long time to come as the standard Catholic history of the Reformation in this country. Yet there are points about this book which puzzle me considerably. With regard to the general history I was struck by the liberal attitude of forbearance shown by the author to Somerset, and I thought I detected echoes of Mr. A. F. Pollard's study of the Protector, written over forty years ago. This impression that much of M. Constant's general history was a little out of date was confirmed in two places: in the treatment of the Court of Star Chamber under Edward VI and in the discussion of the problem of enclosures during the same period. With regard to the first M. Constant says (p. 41): "The Star Chamber, which was simply the Privy Council in its judicial capacity, exercised criminal jurisdiction throughout the realm. It functioned as a centralized police (*sic*) which maintained law and order." This is such a simplification of an exceedingly complex piece of legal history that I wondered where M. Constant had found it. The answer was in Pollard's *England Under Protector Somerset*, one of that great authority's earliest essays in Tudor history written well over forty years ago and published by Kegan Paul in 1900. On p. 8

most the identical expressions with regard to this Court occur. "... in judicial capacity it was known to suitors as the Court of the Star Chamber. . . . The court was, in fact, a centralized police court, exercising jurisdiction over every part of the kingdom."¹ In view of recent research on the question, and notably of his own papers in the *English Historical Review* (July 1922, October 1922, January 1923) I doubt if Mr. Pollard would now subscribe to such a simple and sweeping statement of the legal position and the functions of the Court of Star Chamber. Of the recent literature on the subject M. Constant makes no mention.

With regard to enclosures and the turning of arable into pasture M. Constant says that "the number of peasants and farm-hands thrown out of work is usually estimated at three hundred thousand, at least a tenth of the population". This is the figure quoted by Pollard (p. 210), and is a piece of inference from contemporary literature. But since Pollard wrote, the studies of Mr. Leadam and Professor Gay have shown that the movement was nothing like the extent which contemporary outcry attributed to it. According to Gay it affected less than three per cent of the area of twenty-four counties and displaced between 30,000 and 50,000 persons. Though these figures are not accepted by such an authority as Professor R. H. Tawney, they at least show that 300,000 is not the "usually estimated" figure.

These peculiarities in a modern book led me to look further into the genesis of this volume. It would be possible to give a long list of suggestive similarities with Pollard's works, and in general it seems fair to say that of the ten chapters only four are, in essence at least, up-to-date writing. Chapters I, II and IV are very largely drawn from Pollard's works: either *Henry VIII, Somerset or Cranmer*. The chapters dealing with doctrinal changes during the reign are almost verbatim re-issues of a series of articles which M. Constant published originally in *La Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* in 1911. The biographical chapters on Cranmer and the moderates belong to a later date, and were published in the same review in 1935-36. This of course does not mean that the volume has not very great value. It certainly has. But it makes one hesitate about the author's conclusions in general, and especially about his attitude to questions in dispute at the present moment. Thus, for example, the Lutheran influence on the English Reformation, and especially the influence of Bucer, are dismissed almost off-hand with a note or so. Yet these are among the points which Dr. Messenger has made in the course of his studies on this matter. Some fuller examination of Dr. Messenger's evidence from the pen of M. Constant would have been welcome.

ANDREW BECK, A.A.

Pool's Paradise. Beachcomber. Pp. 198. (Burns Oates, 7s. 6d.)
As they turn over the pages of this his latest volume, those who have Mr. Beachcomber's best interests at heart will observe, not without misgivings,

¹ There has been a mistranslation of "police court" in the French edition of Constant which reads: "c'était une sorte de police centralisée, qui maintenait l'ordre et la tranquillité dans le pays." Pp. 58-9. The mistake is repeated in the English edition.

the continued survival of several familiar shortcomings. To take the most obvious and disquieting first, it is idle to pretend that in these twelve months the author has advanced any further towards defining his attitude in relation to his most patient, persevering and conscientious critic, the distinguished Prodnose. Careful study of a passage on page 60 will make this amply clear. The author in pursuance of his "Home Carpentry" feature, discusses courses on "How to make a Wooden Tomato"—an enterprise in which it will be widely agreed, the difficulties likely to be encountered are wholly out of proportion to the advantages likely to accrue. Mr. Prodnose is ready (one has come to expect it of him) with the comment that goes to the heart of the matter. "Who," he asks trenchantly, "on earth wants a wooden tomato?" The rejoinder: "Collectors" will increase our estimate neither of Mr. Beachcomber's forensic skill nor of his grasp of contemporary realities, and when in reply to his critic's keen *instantia*: "Collectors of what?" he writes: "Collectors of wooden tomatoes, you fool", we feel that true craftsmen will raise their voices in unison with conscientious collectors everywhere to stigmatize what is no more than an evasion of the issue not untinged with discourtesy.

It is a relief to turn to more encouraging features of the book, which are happily not wanting. The passages quoted from the editorial columns of the *Weekly Watcher* (pp. 46, 102, and 180) are chosen with a sympathetic felicity possible only to a devoted student and admirer of that "prophetic soul, that uncle", and the author's modest but firm vindication of the efficiency and reliability of his own sources of information (pp. 42-43) will reassure those who have sometimes permitted themselves to wonder whether Beachcomber is to be ranked as a serious writer or not.

"Dessert" on page 79 should surely be spelt with one "s"; and there is, alas, no index.

W. A. PURDY.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE TEACHING OF DOGMATIC THEOLOGY (CLERGY REVIEW, 1941, XXI, pp. 9, 308, 371; 1942, XXII, p. 96)

"Romanus" writes:

Dom Aelred Graham's article, "Catholic Theology and English Culture", has made many valuable contributions to the discussion on the teaching of Dogmatic Theology initiated by "Paedagogus". But its criticisms seem lacking in consistency. The first part of it gives an account of English culture which Dom Aelred on second thoughts agrees may give "too much weight to the Whig, or Liberal, tradition in English history" while "the continuity of another and deeper element in the national character which finds Catholicism congenial to it has not been sufficiently stressed". This is indeed true, for he has unconsciously collected the versions of Protestant historians and produced something very different from that understanding of the Catholic roots of English culture and of the "anima naturaliter catholica" which is characteristic of many historians.

The difference is serious, for it must colour the attitude of theologians to our culture, and it affects our use of it for ourselves and others.

In practice Dom Aelred concedes much to "Paedagogus", the value of whose article he brings out in many ways, but he joins issue on the main question of the method of the teaching of dogma, and he accuses "Paedagogus", with his advocacy of the heuristic method, of "a serious misconception of what theology is". Now, that its *de fide* theses embody "not problems to be solved but affirmations about God to be accepted by divine faith", who would deny? Certainly not "Paedagogus", who speaks of "the necessarily 'dogmatic' and authoritarian attitude of a dogmatic professor to his unique subject". The question is whether the heuristic *method* can be used in a science whose first premises are revealed truths, or whether our manuals' method of starting with a thesis is, in Dom Aelred's words, "surely the only one consonant with the nature of Catholic theology".

If that is so, it is very odd that, as "Paedagogus" originally remarked, it is not the method adopted by St. Thomas, even, we may add, in the *Summa*, in the very heart of theology. "Utrum processio sit in divinis" and "Utrum Verbi incarnati sit facta in persona" are two excellent examples where the method is heuristic, while of course the decision comes from Revelation. Dom Aelred admits that "St. Thomas certainly handled his materials with greater freedom than is our present custom". He adds that in the *Compendium Theologiae* his method was didactic. True. It is a suitable method. "Paedagogus" did not attack it in our manualists. But it is not the only method. If Dom Aelred seems to argue that it is the only method in modern circumstances, he has the practice of the manualists on his side; but the Church says "in omnibus magistrum sequantur Thomam"! Yet Dom Aelred is not really so rigorous as he might appear, for we find him saying: "the value of the heuristic method, as a stimulant to sluggish wits, cannot be denied; one hopes that it will never be supplanted from its place in the schoolroom." "Paedagogus" was surely arguing that it had been supplanted—to the loss of more than "sluggish wits", and that it should be restored as a natural way to stimulate and clear the mind even in a science which derives from the Divine Light. *Gratia non destruit naturam sed perficit.*

Dom Aelred Graham replies:

With the brief contribution of "Peripateticus" to the discussion (in the February number of the CLERGY REVIEW) I find myself in general agreement. Though his self-confessed failure to see that "the unique character of Dogmatic Theology is any objection"—even supposing my statement of some very definite objections could be shown to be groundless—"to the more heuristic method of exposition proposed by 'Paedagogus'", suggests a curious lack of perception in one who would recall us all to "the point . . . which seems in danger of being obscured". That the heuristic method can be employed in the teaching of theology I did not question: my criticism was directed against an advocacy of that method which seemed to me superficial and confused. However, I join with "Peripateticus" in his support of a more individual approach to the teaching of theology; the problem, as he says, is largely one of practicability. His plea for the illustration of the significance of Dogma by the study of its history, no less than his anxiety that the speculative intellect should be fully exercised, will

command the assent of all who have at heart the welfare of Catholic Theology. His final point, that the heuristic method under discussion has its chief application "in the field of philosophy", corroborates my original contention, viz., that "Paedagogus" argued fallaciously from the suitability of an expository method in one science to its appropriateness in another.

"Romanus", happily, can at least see that there are objections, even though he strives to refute them. After one notable sally he again enters the lists in support of "Paedagogus". In the attempt to extricate his protégé from his difficulties he charges my own essay with inconsistency. Whether English culture is essentially Catholic or non-Catholic is too big a question to be debated here. Authorities can be quoted either way; though that it is informed by an "*anima naturaliter catholica*" is a paradox I have not hitherto seen maintained. For my part I believe that it can best be described as "neutral": yet inimical to Catholicism in as much as it is now dominated by a materialistic secularism.

As touching theological method, it is hard to resist the impression that "Romanus" is more concerned with the defence of "Paedagogus" than with examining the question objectively; his rôle is one of advocate rather than of judge. He manipulates quotations in a good-natured attempt to reconcile us, but he raises no issue, suggests no point of view not already envisaged in my article. I did not say that "our manuals' method of starting with a thesis is . . . surely the only one consonant with the nature of Catholic theology"; nor leave out of account the procedure adopted by St. Thomas; nor suggest that the didactic method was the only one. I tried to make some relevant qualifications and distinctions on all these points.

And thus, while paying due tribute to the perspicacity of "Peripateticus" and cordially reciprocating "Romanus's" manifest good will, I am content to abide by my original criticism of "Paedagogus".

PERMISSU SUPERIORUM